Tales of Red Ruin 11

Catacombs of Dust

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Welcome to **Catacombs of Dust**, a solo adventure for the Dragon Warriors system. To play this adventure, you'll need a character of Rank 7, perhaps one you used in a previous Red Ruin adventure. You may play any Profession. The adventure can be completed at Rank 6, with some difficulty, and at Rank 8 you should find it easier.

You'll need dice and a character sheet. You could photocopy the sheet in the Dragon Warriors Rulebook. Alternatively, follow the link below to download. Stop awhile whilst you're there.

Downloads for the Dragon Warriors RPG (cobwebbedforest.co.uk)

In the adventure, text in **bold** indicates an item that you can take and add to your inventory. Text in *italics* indicates a code word that you should note down.

If a fight is presented you will see options for win, lose, and flee — choose the one most relevant for the result of your fight.

Where it is possible to use a skill or spell to affect the outcome of a section, the text will give you an option to use it. Combat spells should just be used in combat as normal.

Special Rules

Catacombs of Dust is set in deep underground, in a challenging environment of cold and dark. Food, darkness, and exhaustion may all become relevant.

Rations: You may be instructed to eat a ration, which means to take a meal. When creating or equipping your character, each ration costs 1 florin and takes up one inventory slot.

Exhaustion: You may be instructed to gain levels of Exhaustion. Each level of Exhaustion gives a -1 penalty to any attribute roll you make (such as LOOKS, SPEED, STEALTH, and so forth). You will be offered the chance to remove Exhaustion when resting.

Darkness: You may find yourself in places of darkness, which you cannot explore without a source of light. Any carried light source, such as a candle, lantern, or torch, will provide light, but these sources will run out in time. Spells such as Candle, Darksight, Darkeyes, Eyes of Night, or Moonglow, have a similar effect.

The following non-magical light sources are available to buy before you start the adventure:

- **Candles**: Candles cost 1F for five, and five can fit in one inventory slot. Candles are poor light sources. You must have a free hand to fight with one, and suffer -2 ATTACK and -4 DEFENCE while doing so.
- **Torches**: Torches cost 1F each, and use one inventory slot. You must have a free hand to fight with one.
- **Lantern**: A lantern costs 20F, and requires lantern oil to work. Each **oil flask** costs 4F, and two can go in one inventory slot. When you light a lantern it uses half an oil flask. A lantern may be placed on the ground during combat if you have warning, but requires one hand to carry if you are surprised.

Spells

Certain spells will allow you to escape, or cheat death, in the Catacombs.

- **Astral Gate**: If you cast Astral Gate, you can use it to turn to 276 if Cuthbert is with you, or 275 if he is not.
- **Phoenix**: If you are killed in a fight, you may cast Phoenix to return to life in that passage and continue the combat. You may only cast Phoenix once per adventure.

Now, turn to 1 to begin.

Your assistant, Cuthbert

I.

Ages ago, so the legends say, an unnamed King fought a war against foul sorcerers and other evils. When he had laid them low, he created a tomb to incarcerate their spirits, and took for the first time the throne of a united Ellesland. For this reason he is still spoken of as the *First King*.

When the First King finally fell in battle, he was himself interred in the very tomb in which he had imprisoned his enemies, so that he could watch over them until even their memories were dust. Over time, the tomb came to be called the Catacombs of Dust, and its location was forgotten. Some even came to claim that the Catacombs moved from season to season, so that the followers of evil could never locate them.

Through the centuries, adventurers like yourself have sought the Catacombs, hoping to lay their hands on the treasures buried with the King, most of all his crown, which is said to have borne the finest gems in the land, but none has ever succeeded.

You heard the tale of the Catacombs and the First King as a child, but, knowing it an impossible legend, have long put it out of mind. All of that changed recently, when you met Brother Cuthbert.

Cuthbert approached you with a book he'd found, the diary of Bishop Aldwin. In the book, Aldwin claimed to have found the Catacombs, even to have entered them, and then returned alive. Afterwards, he set his experiences down on paper, but told no one, and concealed the book where it lay for eighty years, until Cuthbert came across it.

Aldwin's book, incomplete as it was, fired you with excitement. The Catacombs could be *found*, the treasure could be *recovered*. You gathered your resources and planned an expedition to the desolate mountainside where the diary claimed you'd find the tomb — all the while wondering if there would even be something to see.

Sadly, the book pointed you to the lands of Baron Steno, a robber lord of ill reputation. There was no chance of co-operation, your only choice was to sneak into his realm and make your bid for the Catacombs before he got word of your quest and moved to seize them for himself. So far your luck has held, but for how long?

Turn to 119.

2.

As you step under the arch back into the passage you hear a different voice, altogether more menacing than the shadow in the light, and apparently so close to your ear that you expect to feel the touch of cloying lips on your skin.

Don't be so quick to trust the promises of such creatures. They do not mean you well.

You start, almost dropping the ruby, and look about for the second speaker, but there is nothing to be seen in the amber gloom.

Collecting yourself, you return to the passage (turn to 184).

3.

"Flavius, I need you to look at something."

You produce the **grotesque meal** and set it on the table before you (remove it from your inventory), gulping involuntarily at the carrion stench.

"This, this is what you have been eating!"

Flavius looks confused: "Why yes, I agree it is meagre pickings, but there will be good food waiting on the surface."

"No! You have been eating the *dead*, because you are also dead!" You insist.

To persuade Flavius to see what you see, you must roll equal to or under your LOOKS on 1d20+5, adding your Rank to your LOOKS if you are a Knave. If you fail, your appeal only serves to confuse and annoy Flavius: turn to 19. Otherwise turn to 229.

4.

You take out a **lump of amber** and place it in the dish. At once, the dish, and the lump, flicker with golden light, like the kindling of a fire. You step back, but the light fails to explode into life.

You guess that the light needs more fuel than a single piece of amber to power it.

If you have three **lumps of amber**, you can place all three into the dish by turning to 228. To leave the chamber turn to 54.

5.

You have bend nearly double to crawl your way through the narrow gap between the stones. The space is so tight that you need to leave behind any large items (shields, two-handed weapons, etc.), and must make a DF 12 REFLEXES check or gain one level of Exhaustion.

Eventually, you emerge in a small and irregular space crammed between gargantuan stones. You aren't even sure that this was an intentional construction, perhaps centuries of erosion have revealed it. Things skitter and shift beneath your feet, you hope they are some sort of insect.

Unlike the rest of this area, this chamber is unlit. If you wish to feel around blindly for anything of interest turn to 116. You can use a source of light instead (turn to 230), but will have to extinguish it to leave the chamber. Of course, you can simply leave (turn to 67) if you wish.

6.

You finally defeat the last of the attackers, scattering their old bones across the dark stone of the floor. You've barely got your breath back, however, when you see the skeletons begin to reform! You decide to flee while you can (turn to 47).

7.

The right-hand passage terminates in a circular chamber that feels very much like a shrine. The slab walls are streaked with white where they may once have been plaster, though no other trace of it remains.

Against the far wall is a stone altar, surmounted by a vertical stone slab. On either side of the slab is what appears to be a candle carved out of stone, complete with wick and wax drips.

If you have one of the keywords *Exhume* or *Funeral*, one of these candles is somehow lit, flickering with a bright golden glow that appears to snake its way up the side of the candle from a channel cut into the floor at the side of the altar.

> If you have both *Exhume* and *Funeral* turn to 198

You examine the altar more closely, but there appears to be nothing else to find, and the only exit is back down the corridor (turn to 30).

8.

This small chamber is dominated by an ornate chest carved from a glittering black stone. Jutting horns and serrated edges give it a demonic aspect, and you might hesitate to look within, if the heavy lid were not already knocked off, lying at an angle against the side of the chest.

Inside is dust, probably a foot deep. You have the chilling feeling that the dust is probably crushed bone. Sitting on top of the dust are four items, a **lump of amber**, a single **fingerbone**, a **broken chain**, and an **amber potion**. You can take any of these that you have not already taken, before leaving the chamber (turn to 30).

9.

You dig into the heap of arms and armour, sending broken items clattering to the floor. The noise of your search echoes through the dark corridors of the Catacomb.

Most of the gear is hopelessly ravaged by time, but one piece stands out, a **black dagger** (d4+2, 3) with a serrated blade, which appears undamaged. This dagger has a special potency against the undead. It inflicts double damage on them, and will harm even the incorporeal ones.

You hear a noise behind you, and turn to realise that the noises of your search has attracted some of those walking dead, garbed in the same armour that you have been rooting through. There are two of them, and you must fight them together.

> ***Corpse Knight*** *(rank 1) — Att 11, Ancient Sword (d6,3) Def 5 MD 3 Eva 3 Ref 5 Ste 13 Per 7 AF 4 HP 4*

If the creatures defeat you turn to 164, otherwise you can leave the chamber (turn to 30).

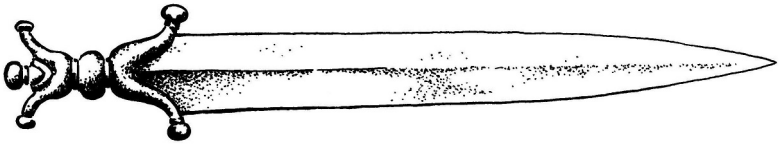
10.

A huge slab rests at an angle here, partially blocking the doorway between a passage and the skull statue chamber. It is surrounded by the dust of shattered mortar and broken stone, but even as you watch, the dust slowly stirs, drifting towards the stone, as if by some arcane sorcery it will eventually make itself whole once more and return to whence it came.

The archway gives access to the skull statue (turn to 259) in one direction, and a corridor (turn to 134) in the other.

11.

You manage to scatter the corpse beetles back to the corners of the room. They will undoubtedly return, but in the meantime you scatter the bones with your foot and spy the glint of gold, treasures no doubt buried with the dead interred here. You manage to grab **gold jewellery** worth 2d6 Crowns (each Crown is 10 Florins) before making your escape (turn to 223).



12.

This passage is in very poor repair. Parts of the walls have collapsed, spilling dirt and shale across the floor, and every step seems to prompt another shower of dust.

As you step forward, part of the ceiling above you collapses with a roar. Dodge a SPEED of 13 or you are hit by a tumbling rock, and take 2d6 damage (reduced by AF if you are wearing a helmet).

Eager to get out of here before before something else collapses, you hurry deeper (turn to 252) or out (turn to 210).

13.

"What are you doing there?" you ask, gulping down your distaste.

The skeletal cook looks up from his work. "Oh, just preparing dinner. There's two dozen hungry legionary mouths to feed, waiting for my work."

You look again at the food and bite back nausea. "But this is carrion, charnel remains, bones!"

"What?" The cook moves over to look at the **grotesque meal** you are examining. When he speaks next he seems hesitant. "No, that's ... ehh ... beef. Or crab maybe. You never can tell with these army victualers." The skeleton gives a nervous clacking laugh.

You can beat a hasty retreat (turn to 111) or draw a weapon and attack the abomination (turn to 212).

14.

The demon's left hand still lies open, the massive fingers crooked as if beckoning you forward. Assuming you have not already taken them, the items you saw before still nestle in its palm — three **lumps of amber** and a **flanged bronze key** in the shape of a winged skull. You may take them now, if you wish, before drawing quickly back (turn to 81).

15.

This chamber is almost perfectly circular, save for the narrow arch that leads back into the stanchion chamber (turn to 244). Seven stone sarcophagi stand upright around the circumference of the walls, each carved from blood-red stone. Six are intact, but the lid of the seventh has been cracked through, allowing the desiccated corpse within to tumble onto the chamber floor.

Before you can react, the first of the intact sarcophagi opens, and a walking corpse scrambles wetly out, a green-stained blade in its hand. You must fight it.

> ***Ghoul*** *(rank 4) — Att 17, Sword (d6,4) Def 9 MD 7 Eva 4 Ref 5 Ste 15 Per 9 AF 0 HP 13*

If the ghoul defeats you, turn to 246, otherwise, no sooner has the creature fallen, than the next sarcophagus begins to open. You can flee back into the stanchion room before it attacks, if you wish. If you don't, repeat the fight above.

If you successfully defeat all six ghouls, turn to 237.

16.

You place a lit **candle** into one of the niches (remove it from your inventory). To your surprise, the glow from the candle seems to spread right through the stone, as if it was made of some sort of crystal, or perhaps a block of amber. The warm light revitalises you, you may regain 1 HP and remove 1 level of Exhaustion.

Pleased, you return to the junction (turn to 262).

17.

The wages of greed, it is often said, are death, and so it is for you. You have delved too far and too deep in your quest for treasure, and this dark lightless pool becomes your grave, alongside the nameless inhabitant you sought to uncover. In this cold, your body does not decay, but is eventually coated in the silt and flowstone of time, converted into nothing more than a statue.

Your soul fares little better.

YOUR ADVENTURE ENDS HERE

18.

As you step back into the main shaft you hear the now familiar groan of stone mechanisms, and realise that the Catacombs are about to change again.

Forewarned, you take a moment to see how the transformation works. The base of the shaft *turns*, like a screw head turning in its shaft, descending as it goes, with the usual accompaniment of shaking and falling stones.

You hurry down to the camp before it can move away, and take shelter with Cuthbert, safe from any rocks that might roll down from the tomb entrances — your confidence is misplaced!

As the ground falls, a crack rends the side of the shaft, and the giant lamp swings free, crashing towards you like the bell of a collapsing cathedral. It only fails to crush you both because you are plummeting down the shaft. The massive chain unspools madly, and the lamp swings back with a deafening chime, back and forth like the pendulum of doom. The sound of rattling chains echoes from below, as if the ground were full of them.

You scramble towards the centre of the floor, only to be thrown back as a massive block of amber, larger than a hand-cart, slams through the floor from below, exploding your campfire in a shower of sparks. Cuthbert wails. Falling rocks smash into the floor like daggers. The lamp swings back once more, but the tomb has finally come to rest.

Slowly, the swinging lamp grows still, and comes to rest on the ground, as you tentatively rise and look around (turn to 66).

19.

You decide that Flavius and the other legionaries must be persuaded of the truth of their condition, but this will be no easy task.

- If you have a **grotesque meal** and wish to confront him with it, turn to 3
- If you have a **bronze mirror** and want to show it to him turn to 124
- If you have a **black mirror** and want to show it to him turn to 185
- If you just wish to persuade him with words turn to 175

If you have no ideas you can agree to help Flavius find a way out turn to 23 or attack him turn to 220.

20.

You attempt to place the three stones, but they won't seem to click into place. You guess that the order must be wrong.

Gasping, you splash back to the surface, where you drag yourself, dripping and frustrated, back to the entrance to the chamber. Behind you, the tomb is silent and enigmatic, its secret — if it has one — still unrevealed.

You can dive down to have another attempt (turn to 239), head back up the passage (turn to 273), or give up entirely (turn to 131).

21.

You attempt to place the three stones, but they won't seem to click into place. You guess that the order must be wrong.

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22.

If you have the keyword *Charnel* turn to 231 now.

You venture under the arch, and emerge in a low and stifling passage, ankle-deep in drifting fumes. The ruddy light seems to increase ahead of you, and a low groaning wheeze echoes down the passage, like the operation of a blacksmith's bellows.

You've barely entered the passage before you find yourself under desperate attack! Two armoured figures, cadaverous guardians in antique bronze, launch themselves at you, swinging two handed swords that barely fit in the confined space.

> ***Tomb Guardians*** *(rank 5) — Att 16, Sword (d10,6) Def 10 MD 5 Eva 5 Ref 8 Ste 13 Per 7 AF 4 HP 15*
>
> *The guardians take turns to attack you. You can choose which one to attack each round, but while both guardians remain, your DEFENCE is reduced by 2.*
>
> *If one of the Guardians is not attacked for two rounds, it will cast a lesser healing spell on itself on the second round, restoring 5HP.*

You can attempt to flee after the first round back to 258, but you will take a parting blow of 5HP if you do. If the guardians defeat you turn to 173, otherwise turn to 28.

23.

If you have the keyword *Ossuary*, you leave the room (turn to 149). Otherwise gain the keyword *Ossuary*

"Of course I will help," you tell Flavius, though you have no idea at this moment how you will do so.

"Then you will have free passage from my men. Go now, with my blessing. Here, perhaps this will help you?"

Flavius produces a **lump of amber** and hands it to you.

You leave the room (turn to 149).

24.

If you have the keyword *Lychgate* turn to 272 now.

You enter the chamber containing the giant lantern, and study it carefully. It seems that each of the sides can swing open — though they are metal gratings the size of a small door — giving access to the centre, which appears to contain some sort of burner apparatus made of amber and copper. The sides are locked with ornate bronze clasps in the shape of jawless skulls.

If you have a **flanged bronze key**, you can use it to open the lantern (turn to 266). To leave the chamber turn to 54.

25.

You cast your magic and soar upwards through the darkness, ascending the shaft. You come level with the great lens and its chains, and then past, towards where the opening to the surface should be. You expect light, air, the touch of the sun, but there is nothing but more darkness and stone.

Eventually, the stone walls contract to a point. Here, at last, is a tiny crack in the stone through which the barest gleam of light, fainter than a candle, issues. There is nothing else. The Catacombs have sealed you in.

There is nothing for it but to return to the depths (turn to 248).

26.

Argantbri raises his arms. "So, you have chosen to take the narrow way to safety. This is wise. The living do not belong in this palace of dust, and the dead cannot escape it."

He makes a mystical gesture, and one of the heavy stone coverings rolls aside to reveal a narrow passage.

"This is your way to safety, take it, and do not return."

If you wish to gather Cuthbert and make your escape, turn to 182, otherwise you can return to the main chamber (turn to 54).

27.

To proceed, you must have a source of light (see the introduction). When you leave this area your light source will be used up (removed from your inventory). If you use a light providing spell, it will expire at that same time. If you don't have a source of light, you must leave the passage (turn to 178) now.

The passage here is of the same sort of massive blocks that you have seen elsewhere in the Catacombs, but here a sheen of water covers the ancient stone, making the ground slick beneath your feet.

Somethings strikes you as different as soon as you enter, a subtle difference in the ornamentation, the style, as if this is a place of commemoration, and not imprisonment. Is it possible that this was the tomb of another of the First King's trusted followers, like Conoc or Argantbri? You examine the carvings on the wall, in the hope of learning more, but the slow drip of water has worn them away. Conoc would be ashamed.

A passage strikes deeper into the mountain (turn to 260), towards the sound of splashing water, while an exit leads back to the main shaft (turn to 54).

28.

Gain the keyword *Charnel*

You defeat the creatures, and then examine them. They are ancient warriors. Their armour reminds you of that you have seen elsewhere in the Catacombs — sworn warriors of the First King. These guardians were surely put here to make sure that people such as you did not enter the tomb of Calligus. It's the first time you've seen such

an aggressive defence, what else awaits you here?

You move away from the fallen guardians, venturing ever deeper into the tomb. The light grows stronger and the air hotter, but a compulsion seems to be drawing you in. Even the ever increasing volume of breaths — when did you start thinking of the noise as breathing — doesn't dissuade you from your course. You pass blind openings in the walls, but you cannot pause to look into them, you *must* see what's ahead!

You emerge into a large domed chamber. Four stone pylons surround a central mass, each anchoring a massive bronze chain. The chains shift and clank, like the halter of a restless bull, and you realise that the mass is moving—

No, not a mass, a *figure*! A giant prostrate figure, bound at wrist and ankle by the chains, which draw its stubby limbs wide. Its grotesque belly, distended, oily, and hairy, mounds up above its shaggy groin. The hands and feet, as long as you are tall, are begrimed and tipped with ragged claws the size of sword-blades. One fist, the right, is clenched tight in its manacle, as if gripping something tight. Impossibly, fresh blood seeps between the fingers, staining the floor crimson with gore.

Most awful of all is the head, a monstrous fanged maw, all snaggle teeth like the jaws of a pike, is surmounted by a tangle of horns and barbs. Chains of human skulls, knotted with ropes of hair, spread out around the beast's head in an obscene parody of the saviour's halo.

The chest of this beast, this *demon*, this Calligus, rises and falls in a stentorian rhythm. Each inhalation pulls the chains taught, each exhalation releases clouds of sulphurous fumes, the same that pollute the whole lowest level of the Catacombs.

As you stand, frozen, at the beast's side, the hideous head rolls and it lets out a deafening roar. A mix of scream and wail that makes you clasp at your head in agony. Impossibly, through the scream, you hear an unctuous voice that seems to issue from *between* your hand and your head, as if a lover was brushing at your ear with its lips.

So here you are at last.

The real terror of the moment is not the beast bound before you, but the fact that this is the same voice that has guided you since you entered the tomb.

Did you like my little clues, my amber pebbles, my earthquakes? The voice chuckles in your ear. *Your arrival was inevitable, but I have not done helping you. I have a gift for you, the treasure you came here seeking. All you have to do is loosen my bonds, can you do that, little one?*

The chained beast roars again, causing dust to shower from the chamber roof and sulphur fumes to gust through the air, but you hear the sound as a cloying whisper that makes you retch. Only then does the compulsion lift and allow you to move again.

Turn to 81.

29.

The centurion rises as you enter, and greets your warmly in archaic Bacchile.

"Warm greetings, friend! You are a sight for sore eyes. My men and I have been trapped in this dark place for far too long, with no way out. Surely you have been sent by the Gods to rescue us!"

The centurion introduces himself as Flavius, and goes on to ask you many questions about how you got into the tomb, and how you intend to get out (which is a question you yourself wouldn't mind having an answer to).

It quickly becomes clear to you that the man has no idea that he is dead, despite the obvious evidence of it. Indeed, you suspect that none of the ancient Selentines has any idea that centuries have passed since they entered the tomb. The realisation sends a chill down your spine — what if you were also dead and did not know it?

"How did you come to be here?" you eventually ask.

"Oh, that is a strange tale," Flavius replies. "We were sent by one of the Emperor's legates, Marcus Antonius. He charged us to seek the tomb of a beast called Calligus, who was said to have been defeated by this Elleslandic King, and to take from it a rod of great power, but our journey was cursed from the very start.

"We lost most of our expedition on the way here to attacks from barbarians. Fine men, cut down. And then, when we descended into this pit, the rocks *moved*, and we were cut off from the surface. So far we haven't found a way back to our comrades on the surface."

"You have to help us."

If you agree to help Flavius find a way out turn to 23. If, instead, you wish to try and persuade Flavius that he is dead turn to 19. Finally, if you prefer to attack the dead centurion turn to 220.

30.

A square chamber interrupts the progress of the passage, its sides constructed from vertical panels of stone marked with blooms of white crystal, as delicate as powder snow. Exits lead out from every wall, two low, to left and right, two taller. A pair of small channels cut into the stone of the floor connect the two taller entrances. (If you have the keywords *Exhume* or *Funeral*, one or both of these channels is faintly glowing).

You can take some **white crystal** if you wish, then choose one of the four exits: left (turn to 187), right (turn to 8), deeper (turn to 7), or out towards the exit (turn to 261).

31.

You approach the massive amber block that punched its way through the chamber floor as you descended. Broken slabs of rock surround it like a primitive stone circle, or an honour guard, kneeling in supplication.

> If you have the keyword *Lychgate*, and the lantern is **Illuminating the amber block**, turn to 148, otherwise, read on.

The block is impossibly large, no tree could produce so much sap, and even if it could, it could never produce such a block — it is larger than any of the amber prisons you say in the tombs above, but certainly the product of the same sorcery.

Unlike those blocks, which were nearly solid but for the thing they enclosed, this one is hollow. Peering through the amber panes that make up its faceted signs, you are surprised to see a figure lying within — a mighty man, grey bearded and regal, as well preserved as if he was only sleeping. His body is clothed in ancient armour, and a crown of gold and gems rests on his snowy brow.

"The First King!" Cuthbert breathes at your elbow, "it must be him. And there is the crown, just as Aldwin described."

"But, he looks *alive*!" you say. "How can that be?"

Cuthbert tugs an earlobe, considering. "These catacombs are prisons for the souls of evil, why should they not hold the soul of a good man also?"

You have only to open this sarcophagus, and you will be able to take the King's treasure, as you had once dreamed of doing — but a certain fear nags at you. The King imprisoned many foul things here, you have seen some of them first hand, and then set himself as their jailor. What will happen if you take the crown? Wealth? Power? or something less desirable?

Return to 258.

32.

You roll away from the falling slab, ducking into the space beneath the statue where the back of the skull overhangs the plinth. The slab slams into the statue, showering you with dust, but doesn't hit you. Turn to 125.

33

As the final chain falls slack, the demon roars in glee. Contracting its misshapen limbs, it rips the chains from their tracks and surges to its feet. Upright, it seems even huger than before, a vast toad-like abomination. Its eyeless head, the horns ripping chunks from the stone vault of the roof, casts about like a hound at the scent, before coming to focus on you.

> You must resist a Fright Attack of 1d10, or void your bowels, reducing your ATTACK and DEFENCE by 2 each.

"YOU SHOULD HAVE TAKEN MY DEAL," the demon says. "IT WAS ALL YOU HAD TO DO, SO EASY."

It takes a step forward, wielding the chains like whips, and attacks. You have no choice but to fight the beast that even the First King could not kill.

> ***Calligus*** *(rank 25) — Att 32, Bronze Chains (d12,12) Def 25 MD 24 Eva 7 Ref 6 Ste 1 Per 20 AF 6 HP 60*
>
> *Can see invisible objects and creatures; can shatter spells within 5m (one per round); immune to non-magical weapons; cannot be Banished.*

There is no fleeing from this fight, the wards on the tomb do not even allow you to *Teleport* away, you must fight to the death. If by some miracle you win, turn to 65, otherwise (and more likely) turn to 98.

34

You tear after the cackling creature, which dances ahead of you through the narrow irregular passage. As it goes, it flings rocks at you, aiming for your head and forcing you to take cover or be hit in the face.

Make a DF14 REFLEXES check. If you pass turn to 155.

If you fail, you lose track of the creature as you are sheltering from the flung rocks. If you have the the Tracking skill, you may make a tracking check — roll under double your PERCEPTION on 1d20. Otherwise, make the same check using your PERCEPTION. If you pass, you manage to trace the creature's passage through the crumbling tunnels; turn to 155.

If you also fail the tracking roll, then, if you have all three of the keywords *Ashes*, *Undercroft*, and *Vault*, turn to 55. Otherwise you come eventually to a junction; turn to 252.

35.

You enter a large domed chamber, dominated by the largest amber block so far, which squats in the centre of the room like a font in a nave. The front of the block has been incised with the mark of an open eye, just like that on the lens above.

If you have the keyword *Kokh* there is nothing more for you to do here, turn to 54 now. Otherwise read on.

You notice at once that the block is cracked; a split runs almost the entire length of the stone, though the crack is not wide. A black shape shifts and twists inside the amber like a fish gasping for air, making the amber glow flicker and flash.

As you enter the chamber a voice issues from the stone, reverberating through the tunnels, even though it is no more than a whisper.

"Voyager ... release me. I am Acteus, the beggar king. I have been imprisoned here since before time, but it is right that you show mercy, for the deeds of those buried here are long forgotten. Look there, that sword, you can use it to break the stone."

You glance aside and see an amber sword leaning against the wall, point down.

"Release me," the voice says, "and you will be richly rewarded."

Choose what you wish to do.

- To use the amber sword to break the block turn to 267.
- To plunge the blade into the crack turn to 138.
- If you have a **banner pole** and want to tie the sword to it before stabbing the block turn to 83
- You prefer to leave now turn to 71.

36.

You thrust a skull under the descending slab, but the old bone simply explodes into powder. Turn to 85.

37.

You venture under the low arch into a claustrophobic chamber, low-roofed and foetid. A bronze chain as thick as your thigh enters the chamber above your head, through a stone-edged hole, and is then fastened to the floor by a massive hasp.

> If you have the keyword *Zombie* this chain has been undone, and there is nothing more to do here but choose an exit. Otherwise, if you wish to try and release the chain, turn to 99.

Three passages lead out of this chamber, one towards the central chamber (turn to 81), one towards the entrance passage (turn to 62), and a third that leads deeper into the mountain (turn to 76).

38.

You join Cuthbert where he is studying the ancient inscriptions by candle-light, with Aldwin's book close at hand.

"This is fascinating," he tells you, "so many names and symbols otherwise lost to time. I don't know why Aldwin didn't record all of them, though I suppose we don't know how far he dared to enter."

"Can you tell me anything about what I might expect to find in the chamber above?"

Cuthbert muses, tugging at his earlobe. "Well, Aldwin does mention one name, that of Ludic of the Cassi, notorious headhunters from ancient days. I do not know if the Cassi are interred here, but they were indeed one of the monstrous enemies the First King is said to have defeated.

> Gain the keyword *Crypt*, and turn to 44.

39.

You stand amidst the crushed remains of the dead legionaries. There is likely only a little time before more of these creatures converge, so you quickly ransack the chamber.

You find a small box in the corner. It contains **300 florins** in ancient Selentine silver, a **flanged bronze key** in the shape of a skull, a **jewelled aquila**, two decrepit beeswax **candles**, and a **healing potion** (heals 7HP, or 3HP if you drink half).

You hurry out into the passage, only to find another pair of legionaries advancing towards you. You must fight them together (remember to split your defence between them).

> ***Skeletal Legionaries*** *(rank 1) — Att 11, Sword (d8,4) Def 5 MD 1 Eva 3 Ref 10 Ste 13 Per 7 AF 3 (5 vs. stabbing) HP 15 (shield)*
>
> *On the first turn, the legionaries are 20 feet away, and they attack by throwing pila. (d8,4) at medium range (+3).*

If you lose the fight turn to 215. If you win turn to 168.

40.

"Enough!"

The ghost of Ceawlin raises its blade in salute. "Perhaps you can be of aid, after all. When the demon Calligus slew our King, and us, it tore the heart from his chest. It holds it still, clutched in its fist. Then, we could not wrest the heart from it. But now, after so many uncountable years in the dark, it might be possible.

"If you could remove the heart, and return it to the King, there might be a better end for all of us than the curses we labour under. But be cautious, wards and protections were placed to prevent the beast's bonds from being loosened."

Ceawlin gestures at the closed sarcophagus. "Open my grave, and take the amulet within. It was my badge of office as *ambactus* to the King. With it some of the defences will be lessened, but I cannot do anything about the others."

You do as the ghost commands, and wrest open the tomb. Within, the dusty tracks of bones lie in a red-stained bed of rust. Only **ceawlin's amulet** remains uncorrupted. You fetch it out and loop it around your neck (it does not consume an inventory slot).

The ghost looks sadly upon the bones, and then is gone without a sound.

Turn to 76.

41.

You draw Cuthbert aside. "What do you think of this ghost? This Argantbri?"

Cuthbert tugs on his earlobe viciously. "I don't like it at all." He picks up Aldwin's book, clutching it like a talisman. "We knew that the evil dead were trapped here, that was the King's purpose, according to the legend, but now we see that there are innocent men here, Conoc, Argantbri. It appears that the King was buried with his retainers, like some despot of Krarth."

"But he offers us a way out. If we do not accept his offer, we may be trapped here too?"

Cuthbert is clearly scared, but braves himself. "We came here to seek the legendary King — his remains, his treasures, his crown. Perhaps this ghost haunts this tomb just to deter the brave from going further.

"And there is another thing, I found it just now in the book. The name Calligus. I do not know what it means, but Aldwin describes it as the greatest evil that the King conquered. Maybe Argantbri is just trying to save us from this evil."

Cuthbert puts the book down on the stone beside him. "Still, I am not the one risking my life by entering the tombs, I will be guided by your decision."

"My thanks," you reply dryly, and take your leave (turn to 54).

42.

The right-hand passage terminates in a small chamber that appears to be something like a store-room, perhaps for priests who once tended to the cursed dead. One wall appears to be shelves, made from boxes of thin stone, rather like a honeycomb. The long-decayed remains of vellum scrolls lie in the spaces like papery fungus.

On the floor are the remains of a wooden box, about two feet long. The lid appears to have fallen off when the sides collapsed. A faint dusty brown stain suggests it once had rope handles.

The box appears to contain four **candles**, a heavy **copper bracelet**, and an odd **flanged bronze key** about the size of your palm. Where the flanges meet the metal has been shaped into a jawless skull.

You search around the rest of the room, but there's nothing else to find, so you head back down the passage (turn to 113).

43.

You hold up the **bronze mirror** in front of you, cowering behind it like it was a shield. Instead of slamming into it, the spectre recoils, apparently attempting to scramble away, but the mirror draws it in, like a leaf caught in a drain. With one final soundless cry the undead creature is gone.

When you dare to lower the mirror, you see that it has turned utterly black. Replace the bronze mirror in your inventory with the **black mirror**, then turn to 143.

44.

You are in the central chamber of the catacombs. A rising spiral path winds around the inside of the vast shaft above you, but it is broken in many places, and only one tunnel opening appears to be accessible. High overhead, the ominous glass lens glitters dully, and beyond that you can just make out the circle of light marking the entrance to the shaft.

In the centre of the chamber, Master Cuthbert works at your makeshift camp, taking rubbings of the broken stones by candle-light. The rope — your only means of returning to the surface — dangles nearby.

From here you may:

- Speak with Cuthbert (turn to 38)
- Go up the ramp to investigate the passage (turn to 101)
- Examine the sealed passages (turn to 176)
- Make the difficult ascent back to the surface (turn to 172)
- Take a moment to rest (turn to 63)
- Store or retrieve items from your belongings (turn to 97)

If you can cast the spells *Fly* or *Levitate* you may use them to fly back to the surface (turn to 265).

45.

You call Cuthbert over to the embers of the fire and take a seat on one of the fallen blocks of stone, sipping from a jar of ale you brought down with your supplies.

"As I delve into these tombs, it seems there is some pattern, but I cannot clearly perceive it," you tell him.

Cuthbert tugs absently at his earlobe as he considers a reply. "It seems to me each of these catacombs serves to illustrate some lesson: memory, mercy, truth, judgement, vengeance ... what have you. I am coming to believe this is a deliberate test by the dead King. Maybe to ensure those who come here are worthy to recover his crown."

"All those who have come here before us are dead," you observe.

"Yes ... exactly so."

This is somewhat cold comfort, so you leave him to his rest (turn to 201).

46.

There is another amber block set into the wall here, but the crystal is split, and there is nothing inside. You draw your weapon at once, knowing what manner of abominations are encased in these blocks, but nothing emerges to threaten you.

You examine the broken stone and see that a word has been etched on the inside of the hollow cavity. It appears to say *Paimon*.

The passage curves one way towards the entrance (turn to 142), and the other away from it (turn to 223).

47.

You move cautiously down a narrow passage. Niches in either side have been broken open, the bones inside split and scattered across the floor.

The passage splits in two, a side-way cutting off to the left (turn to 139), while the main corridor continues into the mountain (turn to 111) and out towards the entrance (turn to 233). A faint sound, like the rattle of bones, comes from the left-hand passage.

48.

You take the **first king's crown** from the open sarcophagus and weigh it in your hands. The ancient gold is heavy, intricately inlayed with spirals and circles, and inset with gems as big as quail's eggs. This is the sort of treasure that makes men into kings.

You are still rapt in contemplation when you feel a tremor beneath your feet. It is not the tumult of the ancient tomb's mechanisms, more an anticipatory tremble, as if by removing the crown from the coffin, you have put the very fabric of the catacombs in peril. From the yawning mouth of Calligus' tomb you hear a chilling groan of pleasure, like a hungry gourmand laying eyes on the feast.

"This is the treasure you sought," Cuthbert says. "What was it you told me when we met, 'the sort of thing adventurers like you have dreamt of'? Well here it is." He runs his hand over his face, wiping away a sheen of sweat. "But I am uneasy. This mark, the eye, a sealing mark, a warding. Now that we have seen the thing imprisoned here, I am reluctant to disturb them."

He makes a good point, but this is the very goal of all your efforts.

You must decide whether to take the crown (add it to your inventory) or not, before returning to the shaft (turn to 258).

49.

The hasp fastening the chain to the stone of the floor is corroded with age, but the bronze is still wrist thick, and merely tugging on it isn't enough to make it release. If you have a war-hammer, or mace, you can use it to smash the hasp open. Otherwise, you will have to make do with brute strength. Make a DC15 STRENGTH check. If you fail, the effort of labouring in the noxious heat drains you — gain a level of Exhaustion.

Either way, the hasp eventually grinds open, allowing the chain to spring free. It rattles up into the hole in the wall, the end sparking against the stone before it falls still. A roar of unpleasant pleasure echoes through the chambers.

Gain the keyword *Cemetery* and turn to 81, ticking a box.

50.

You are just helping yourself to the content of the niche, when you are struck by a dolorous blow from behind! Take 5 damage. If this kills you, turn to 215.

You turn around to find yourself confronted by two grinning skeletons dressed in the rusty panoply of Selentine legionaries! You don't have time to work out what this means, because you must fight them both at once (remember to split your defence between them). Because they have ambushed you, they act first in the first round.

> ***Skeletal Legionaries*** *(rank 1) — Att 11, Sword (d8,4) Def 5 MD 1 Eva 3 Ref 6 Ste 13 Per 7 AF 3 (5 vs. stabbing) HP 15*

If you defeat the skeletons turn to 191, otherwise turn to 215.

51.

You place a **candle** on each holder (remove them from your inventory), and light them. A warm glow fills the passage, illuminating the scattered bones.

Before your eyes, the dust surrounding the bones swirls and rises, forming a human figure. Remembering the spectre you jump back in alarm, but the misty shape raises a placating hand, and speaks in a hollow whisper.

"Thank you, stranger, for your mercy. In life I was a force of evil, but time erases all things, even my crimes. Now I am merely nameless, and you have given me peace.

"If you would extend this mercy to my fallen comrades, light a candle on the altar. Even if you do not, I give you my blessing."

With that, the figure fades away, dust on the wind.

Gain the keyword *Funeral*. You also gain the ghost's blessing. If you have any Exhaustion, remove it. If you have no Exhaustion, you gain a +1 bonus to each stat roll you make until you next rest. Now, turn to 165.

52.

You raise the bronze banner pole, hoping to impale the creature on it as you might a charging boar on a hunting spear, but the spectre passes right through the metal as if it weren't there. You lose 2 HP and 2 MP. Turn to 254.

53.

If you have the keyword *Undercroft* turn to 90, otherwise gain the keyword *Undercroft* now.

As you pick your way along the central passage, you pass an alcove containing the statue of an antique armoured figure, seven feet tall, with its face struck off. You stop to look, only to catch a flicker of movement behind the statue.

With a groan, the statue topples forward. Avoid a SPEED of 7 (roll less than 7 - your EVASION on 2d10) to get out of the way. If you fail you take 3d6 damage (reduced by your AF). If this reduces you to zero health turn to 208, otherwise you hear a cackle of evil laughter as something scampers away into the darkness.

You can head back towards the entrance (turn to 210), go further along the passage (turn to 196), or take a narrow turn left (turn to 61) or right (turn to 160). You think the creature that attacked you turned left, but aren't sure.

54.

☐☐☐☐

You return to the dubious safety of the shaft, with only the pale hues of the lens-light to guide you. If you had a light source, it gutters and dies.

If you have been instructed to "mark a box" tick one of the boxes above, then:

- If you have just ticked the first box turn to 130
- If you have just ticked the second box turn to 174
- If you have just ticked the third box turn to 102
- If you have just ticked the last box turn to 18

If you were not instructed to tick a box, then:

- If you have no boxes ticked turn to 248
- If you have one box ticked turn to 201
- If you have more than one box ticked turn to 57

55.

You decide that there's no choice but to head back to the main chamber and regroup. You are making your way there when you hear a spiteful snigger, and realise that the creature haunting the tomb is *ahead* of you!

You break into a run, but the creature makes it through the open entrance of the tomb before you do. You shout a warning to Cuthbert, but it seems the creature has no aim beyond escape, and it vanishes into the depths of the Catacombs.

Whatever ancient lesson the First King had in mind to teach you, it was unlikely to be this.

Gain the keyword *Tomb*, and then turn to 54 without ticking a box.

56.

Gain the keyword *Yew*

As you watch, aghast, the First King's body — protected for millennia against the predations of time — crumbles away to dust. The fine armour flakes away, the grand burial robes turn brown, then fall apart, even the old man's bones follow the fate of his once-preserved flesh and crumble before your eyes. Of all the King's panoply, only the fabled crown remains, now resting at the bottom of the sarcophagus.

Looking at that crown, the very one you have dreamed of for years, you see that it is inscribed with the same open eye that you have seen elsewhere in the tomb. The King's seal. It must have rested upon his brow.

You can take the crown (turn to 48), or leave well enough alone (turn to 258).

If you have the **dead king's heart**, you may place it in the sarcophagus (turn to 274) instead.

57.

You are in the central chamber of the catacombs, albeit at a lower level than before. A rising spiral path winds around the inside of the vast shaft but much of it is broken, so that it only gives access to a few entrances close to ground level. Overhead, the vast stained-glass lens gathers sunlight you cannot even see, and casts it down as a shifting medley of light.

Master Cuthbert stays close to the fitful embers of your fire, which is fast running short of fuel, casting nervous glances at the shadows, where a faint blue light seems to glimmer.

From here you may:

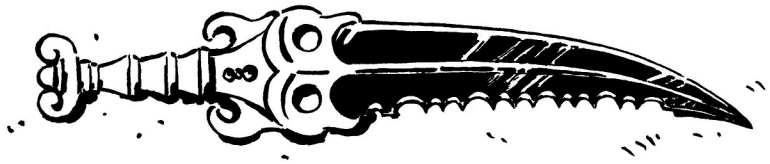
- Investigate the glimmering light (turn to 86)
- Speak with Cuthbert (turn to 171)
- Take a moment to rest (turn to 169)
- Store or retrieve items from your belongings (turn to 97)

You may also venture into one of the open tunnels leading out of the shaft. Six of these are open, including the alcove containing the enormous lantern, while others are covered by massive circular stone slabs, as yet unopened.

- One at ground level (turn to 177)
- One accessible by a mound of rubble (turn to 178)
- One that opens onto the spiral ramp (turn to 78)
- One with a light glowing within (turn to 213)
- One whose slab is only half open (turn to 144)
- The lantern chamber (turn to 24)

If you have the keyword *Lychgate*, then a golden glow is issuing from the lantern chamber.

If you have a **copper tray** turn to 74 to examine it.



58.

This was probably once an ornate chamber, perhaps a tomb, or oratory, but now it is calf-deep in freezing greenish water, that almost appears to glow when your light touches it.

> If you do not have the keyword *Revenant* turn to 222 now. Otherwise, read on.

You trace the faint lines of worn-away script on the chamber walls. Perhaps this place once celebrated the achievements of a great hero — or the crimes of a terrible demon. You can't tell one way or the other.

Four passageways lead out of the flooded chamber, one towards the entrance (turn to 150), one left (turn to 147), one right (turn to 114), and one deeper (turn to 273).

59.

Steno's raiders lie defeated, but it's only a matter of time till your position is discovered again. The Baron's men will be back, and likely in larger force. You anticipated, and dreaded this. If you leave Pyran and your supplies here any longer, they will undoubtedly be found. Pyran would be lucky to live, and your supplies would be stolen. Even the tents would give away your camp to anyone searching for you.

"Pyran, my boy, it's time for you to return to the village."

You tell Pyran to gather the tents, the bulky supplies, and the horses, and head back to the village where you hired him. From now on, you and Cuthbert will be on your own, with only the rope as your lifeline.

Turn to 96.

60.

You dive down to the bottom of the chamber, your held breath painful in your lungs, and feel around — sight is useless in these black depths. Your fingers touch slime, silt, and old bones, and then fasten around something angular and heavy.

When you surface again, you find that you are clutching a **triangular keystone**, a piece of rock about the size of your palm, marked with a curious symbol, a little like the open eye marked on the great lens. You pocket it (discard another item if necessary) and swim back to the comparatively dry corridor (turn to 273).

61.

You rush down the left hand passage, chasing the cackling shape. Dust showers down around you as you dislodge the old stones, but you burst out into a parallel passage, where the walls are filled with niches, each one containing a pottery jar.

You barely have time to realise that the creature you are chasing has stopped, before it hurls half a dozen jars at you, each one exploding into clouds of dust and bone shards.

> Dodge attacks with a SPEED of 12 five times, then resist a MAGICAL ATTACK of 10, +3 for each jar you failed to dodge. If the magic takes hold, then you are cursed until you take your next rest. While cursed you must adjust every dice roll you make by 2, in whatever is the least favourable direction.

If you wish to continue chasing the creature turn to 159, otherwise turn to 12.

62.

You are in the arched entrance passage of Calligus' tomb, close to the central chamber. The air is thick, and the wheezing breath of the demon is hot on your neck. The stone walls are deeply incised with warding symbols, repeated over and again, endlessly marching into the darkness, but their angular lines are smudged with sulphur stains and gelid ooze that seems to have condensed into the gaps and solidified.

Two passages cross here, one leads towards the entrance (turn to 231) and towards the demon (turn to 81). The other, much narrower, goes left (turn to 192) and right (turn to 37).

63.

You take some time to rest in the vague patch of sunlight in the centre of your camp. It's cold and still, but Cuthbert has managed to light a small fire.

> If you have a **ration**, you may eat it to recover 1 HP, and to remove one level of Exhaustion.

When you are done you get back to your feet (turn to 44)

64.

Flavius is astounded to hear that you have found a way to escape the Catacombs.

"My friend! I did not think it possible! Truly, you have been sent by the Gods. Come! There is not a moment to be lost, let us make our escape now!"

If you wish to leave the Catacombs now, with Flavius and the legionaries in tow turn to 221. Otherwise, you tell him that he must be patient a little while longer, and take your leave (turn to 149).

65.

Gain the keyword *Headstone*

It seems impossible that any one person could defeat what the First King and all his court could not, and yet you have done it. Calligus lies dead at your hand, or at the very least is rendered dormant once more, a prisoner in the Catacombs as it always was.

You limp forward through the gore, needing to be sure that the beast will not simply rise again as soon as you turn your back, and see the things that have fallen from its grasp as it fell.

Three **lumps of amber** and a **flanged bronze key** in the shape of a winged skull fell from its left hand, but you are focused on what fell from its right, a human heart, still faintly beating — the **dead king's heart**. You lift it reverently and cup it in your hands, feeling the faint tremble of life. This is not simply an organ, but a fragment of the First King's soul, kept prisoner by Calligus for all the centuries since the King's death.

As you walk from the tomb, ghostly figures appear on every side, not hostile spectres, but the spirits of all those who died and were entombed as guardians: Conoc, Ceawlin, Wassa, Argantbri, and many others. They do not raise a tumult, but you feel their blessing wash over you as you stumble out into the gloom of the central chamber.

Cuthbert rushes to your side. "What happened? Tell me. I heard the most terrible noises. I was sure you were dead, but I prayed for your soul."

You rest a hand on his shoulder, though it's hard not to slump to your knees. "Maybe your prayers were the key," you tell him. "The demon is dead, and I hold the dead King's heart in my hands. Come, I think I have the means to light the lantern and open the King's tomb. Let us do it together."

Turn to 258.

66.

Gain the keyword *Cremation*

You take stock of your new situation. You are deeper than ever before, and the walls of the great central shaft are smooth and bare; the lowest tomb entrance is so far above your head that you can barely make it out in the darkness. Strangely the tomb is warmer now than it was before, and dimly lit by a sulphurous glow that appears to emerge from cracks in the rock floor. From somewhere, there is the clank of chains.

Turning on the spot, you make out four features of interest. There is of course the great lamp (If you have the keyword *Lychgate* the lamp is lit, and its amber radiance helps to lift the gloom), and the amber block that smashed through the floor. There also appear to be two exits from the chamber: one is a narrow opening blocked by a sheet of amber, the other, a squat and ominous entrance, surrounded by skulls in niches, and surmounted by a warning inscription.

Before you can take a closer look, there is a flash of blue fire, and the ghost of Argantbri takes form once more.

"Woe on you who have come to this place," the spectre intones. "This is the grave of all folly, the resting place of my King and the beast that slew him. The narrow way and the broad are closed to you now. There is only one means of escape."

The ghost raises a hand and points at the amber-blocked entrance. "Bring the King's fire. Shine it upon the door, open the gate. Only then can you return to the world of the living."

The ghost seems to fix you in the eyes with its stare as it whispers: "Fly, you fools."

Then Argantbri is gone.

Cuthbert, his arms wrapped nervously about himself, limps to the foreboding entrance and reads the word carved above it. "Calligus".

Turn to 258.

67.

You turn awkwardly around in the narrow space, and crawl out again. The space is so cramped that you are forced to extinguish any light source you may have lit (and allow any spell to expire).

Turn to 115.

68.

Gain the keyword *Dolmen*. You may also restore any lost MP, or Psychic Fatigue.

You look around the main chamber, taking in its new dimensions. The floor level seems to have dropped by at least thirty feet, leaving your dangling rope — your only lifeline to the surface — far out of reach. Worse, the distant circle of light that marks the opening seems to have contracted, you aren't even sure you *could* get out, even if the rope were available.

Where the sunlight fell before, there is now a pale multicoloured glow. You realise that as the chamber floor descended, so did the great glass lens, which now casts a wide circle of tinted light down the shaft. Looking around, you see that a whole new level of shaft wall has been revealed, dotted with openings that were previously concealed. What will Cuthbert make of these?

Cuthbert! He was down here in the midst of it while the stones were falling. He could be badly injured!

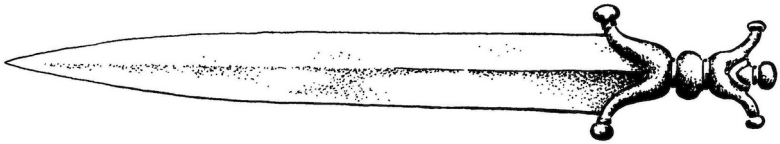
You scramble down to the remains of your camp, calling for Cuthbert. To your relief the old man answers, and you discover that he is shaken, but unhurt, cowering under a propped up slab.

"I'm glad to see you!" Cuthbert says, "but what in the Lord's name happened?"

You outline your adventures in the skull passage, then look for some way out, but there is nothing. Your calls up the shaft go unanswered, and the spiral walkway has broken in too many places for it to help you reach the rope. Even though the lens has lowered, it is still far out of reach. There is no choice but to find a way forward, and perhaps then a way out.

Looking around, you can see that there are now three openings in the walls at various heights you can still reach.

Turn to 248.



69.

Tons of rocks fall from the unstable ceiling, entirely sealing the passage and filling the air with dust. It's a miracle that you survive the blows, and you give thanks to God for your deliverance, before slowly coming to realise that you are trapped in this sightless pocket, and the air is already growing stale!

If you can cast *Astral Gate*, and wish to use it to escape, turn to 275. If you can cast *Transformation*, you can turn into a rat and scrabble your way out to 196. You can achieve the same with *Intangibility*, *Fissure*, *Vaporize*, or *Teleport*.

YOUR ADVENTURE ENDS HERE

70.

Flavius rises as he sees you, and bids you join him in his chamber, seemingly oblivious to the fact that he has been sitting in the cold darkness.

"My friend, have you found a way out?"

If you have the keyword *Quietus*, and wish to tell Flavius that you have indeed found a way out, turn to 64. If, instead, you wish to try and persuade Flavius that he is dead turn to 19. Finally, if you prefer to attack the dead centurion turn to 220.

If you wish to do none of these things, you are forced to tell him that no, you are still seeking, and make your exit (turn to 149).

71.

Two branching passages meet here, curving away left (turn to 115) and right (turn to 249) towards the main chamber. A third passage, roughly arched, leads towards a pulsing amber glow deeper in the mountain (turn to 35). The air seems to pulse with whispers, though you can't hear anything.

72.

The passage terminates in a circular chamber, its roof arching above your head. In the centre of the chamber is a stone plinth, and sitting on that, yet another skull.

As you enter, a glow lights within the skull, as if it contained a lantern within the shell of its bone, and you reach for your weapon, but instead of attacking, the skull speaks.

"Hold hard, you who dares to enter the Catacombs. I am Conoc, long dead, who holds the keys to this land of dust. If you would proceed, you must answer my question. But beware, for once you commit to these deeps, never shall you leave, save that you can bring the light of all lights to night itself."

"Do you wish to answer?"

If you wish to try Conoc's question turn to 118, otherwise you have no choice but to head back down the corridor (turn to 134), or attack the skull (turn to 263).

73.

You launch into a mighty line of rhetoric, exploiting every trick of logic and emotion to make the centurion see the truth. The effort drains you; gain one level of Exhaustion.

> To persuade Flavius of the truth of what you say, you must roll equal to or under your LOOKS on 1d20+10, adding your Rank to your LOOKS if you are a Knave.

If you fail, your insistence angers Flavius, and he has you escorted back to the central chamber (turn to 54). Otherwise turn to 229.

74.

You set the old copper tray down in front of the fire and take a good look at it. Although the legionaries were using it as a serving platter it is more akin to a mirror. Inscribed on its face is the same eye pattern you saw on the great lens above.

You realise that the mirror could be used to reflect light into the darkened passages. Trying it out at the nearest entrance, you find that the mirror seems to gather the spectral lens-light, even as the lens gathers the unseen sun, throwing out a faint iridescent beam. If you place the lens outside a passage, you will have the equivalent of candle-light while inside without needing to carry a light, and without consuming a light source.

Remove the **copper tray** from your inventory and add the **light mirror**, then turn to 54.

75.

You cautiously approach the spear trap set into the wall. Just because you sprung it once doesn't mean that is hasn't been reset, but the old bronze points are still half-blocking the passage.

Just beyond the trap, a narrow passage, barely more than two foot wide, runs off to your left (turn to 252), while the main passage continues deeper (turn to 181), and towards the central shaft (turn to 53).

76.

A narrow passage, crudely built, cuts through the rock to link one of the stanchion chambers to another. It looks like the unknown builders of the Catacombs took advantage of a flaw in the stone and simply widened it to create this route, though even here the incised wards have been chipped into the walls.

Some way along the passage, it breaks into a natural cavity in the rock, where water drips from the roof, sizzling away when it hits the hot rock. This cavity has been pressed into service as a crypt, with side chambers walled off with rough masonry. Peeking nervously through the simple archways you make out three tombs, each surmounted by a rough carving, cut into the stone lids. One appears to represent a warrior (turn to 154), one a religieux (turn to 157), and the third a woman (turn to 256).

You can choose to examine any of the tombs, or follow the passage left towards the central shaft (turn to 192) or right, away from it (turn to 77).

77.

You enter one of the claustrophobic stanchion chambers. The heavy chain runs through a circular opening above the low arch that leads to the central chamber (turn to 81), and then sags down towards the heavy bronze hasp fastening it to the floor.

This chamber is ankle deep in charnel-house detritus — smashed bones and atomised armour. Everything is scorched black, flaked with burn scoring. The ancient bronze of the armour is melted, and has run into the cracks between stones like the delicate wire inlays of a goldsmith. Whatever defences the First King left here have been blasted away.

> If you have the keyword *Cemetery* this chain has been undone, and there is nothing more to do here but choose an exit. Otherwise, if you wish to try and release the chain, turn to 49.

As well as the route to the central chamber, two narrow passages lead out of this space, one towards the beast's feet (turn to 236) and one towards the other side of its body (turn to 244).

In the back wall of the chamber you spot a narrow crack (turn to 158) running up the wall.

78.

You venture back up the curving ramp, wishing that it ran all the way to the surface, but it goes no further than the entrance you are heading for. The huge circular capstone, only just fallen away, leans against the wall. The Kellish rune for the number **4** is marked above it.

> If you have the keyword *Mausoleum* you have already delved into this passage, and no more can be done here. You must choose another option (turn to 54).

If you wish to enter the passage turn to 162.

Below you, a spark of candle-light betrays where Cuthbert works in the middle of the chamber (turn to 54).

79.

> If you have the keyword *Barrow*, turn to 10 now. Otherwise gain the keyword *Barrow*.

The moment you step under the arch, you feel the ground shift beneath your feet, you have triggered a pressure plate! With a horrible grinding, a massive slab of stone swings down towards you, as if to crush you flat!

- If you have a **skull** and want to use it to block the stone, turn to 36.
- If you don't have a skull, and want to grab one to use, test REFLEXES. If you succeed turn to 36, otherwise 85.
- If you'd rather try to dodge out of the way turn to 121.
- If you'd prefer to run for the skull statue turn to 32.

80.

You attempt to place the three stones, but they won't seem to click into place. You guess that the order must be wrong.

Gasping, you splash back to the surface, where you drag yourself, dripping and frustrated, back to the entrance to the chamber. Behind you, the tomb is silent and enigmatic, its secret — if it has one — still unrevealed.

You can dive down to have another attempt (turn to 239), head back up the passage (turn to 273), or give up entirely (turn to 131).

81.

You are in the prison chamber of Calligus, at the heart of the lowest tomb, where the vile devil lies bound, but not defeated.

If you have just been instructed to *tick a box* then tick one of the boxes above. For each of the boxes ticked, one of the massive chains binding Calligus hangs loose. If you have just ticked the final box, turn to 33 now.

If not, but you have the keyword *Cemetery*, then the demon's left fist is now unchained. If you have just gained the keyword turn to 127 now, otherwise you may approach the hand by turning to 14.

Otherwise, if you have the keyword *Burial*, then the demon's bloody right fist is now unchained, and open. If you dare to approach it turn to 206.

The demon stirs as you approach, its foetid breath curling towards you like a tentacle. The beast's vile presence makes you sick to your stomach, but in some blasphemous way it also restores you — you may regain 1HP.

Calligus moans, but once again its horrible noises become honeyed words: *I do hope you are not hesitating to help me. Here, I have something in my left hand that will help you. Take your treasure and begone.*

Five low arches lead out of the chamber. One runs towards the entrance (turn to 62), each of the others follows the path of one of the binding chains, which loop over a stone pylon, and then vanish into the stone, one for each of the: left foot (turn to 192), right foot (turn to 37), left hand (turn to 77) and right hand (turn to 244).

82.

You attempt to place the three stones, but they won't seem to click into place. You guess that the order must be wrong.

Gasping, you splash back to the surface, where you drag yourself, dripping and frustrated, back to the entrance to the chamber. Behind you, the tomb is silent and enigmatic, its secret — if it has one — still unrevealed.

You can dive down to have another attempt (turn to 239), head back up the passage (turn to 273), or give up entirely (turn to 131).

83.

Gain the keyword *Kokh*

You lash the amber sword to the **banner pole** (remove this from your inventory) to make a kind of spear, and thrust it into the cracked amber block. As you make the blow, clawed arms burst from the crack, lashing the air, but they cannot reach you, and your blow strikes true. A terrible scream, of rage not pain, rings through the darkness of the tomb, and then goes silent.

Mercy was not the First King's lesson here.

You may take the **amber sword** (d6+3,5,magical) if you wish, then turn to 54, marking a box.

84.

If you have the keyword *Lychgate* turn to 179 now.

You approach the great lantern, which rests on the rough floor a little way from what's left of your camp. You study it carefully. It seems that each of the sides can swing open — though they are metal gratings the size of a small door — giving access to the centre, which appears to contain some sort of burner apparatus made of amber and copper. The sides are locked with ornate bronze clasps in the shape of jawless skulls.

If you have a **flanged bronze key**, you can use it to open the lantern (turn to 163). If you don't then there is likely only one place left to find one — Calligus' tomb. Turn to 258.

85.

Despite your efforts, the huge slab slams into you with crushing force! You lose 2d6 HP. If you somehow survive this blow, turn to 10, otherwise, your expedition into the Catacombs ends here, ignominiously flattened by a stone.

YOUR ADVENTURE ENDS HERE

86.

If you have the keyword *Quietus* turn to 238 now. Otherwise gain the keyword *Quietus* and read on.

With Cuthbert at your side, you cautiously approach the corner of the chamber where the blue light glimmers. You can make out another covered passageway set into the wall nearby.

When you are a few yards away, the light suddenly blooms, and forms into the shape of a spectral man, robed and bearded. Cuthbert yelps, and brandishes his cross, and you aim your weapon, but the ghost makes no hostile move.

Instead, it raises a calming hand, and declares: "Be at peace. I am Argantbri, who in life was the Great King's advisor. I am here to tell you that you have delved too far, and too deep. This is no place for living men, and if you perish, your souls shall never know the light again."

Mastering your fear you make a reply. "So have you come to taunt us, spirit, for we are as trapped here as the dead. Unless we push on and find your King's remains."

"It is not so," the ghost replies. "If you press on to the realm of Calligus, surely you will perish, as have all others unworthy souls who sought the King's treasure. There is nothing there to find but sorrow. But there is another way. I can open an exit from this tomb through which you may make your escape, you have only to come here and ask me."

Cuthbert has by this point plucked up enough courage to ask: "And if we do this, will we be able to return?"

Argantbri fixes him with a piercing stare. "No. This place is not for mortal man, it is a prison for that which must never see day again. Now, go and consider your mortality, and return when you have realised that this is no place for you!"

Turn to 54.

87.

As you emerge from the passage, back into the dubious safety of the shaft, your light gutters and dies, leaving you with only the pale sunlight issuing from high above — and the answering glow of Cuthbert's lamp below — to guide you.

Turn to 101.

88.

You pick up Pyran's lantern and take a good look around.

You are in a large circular chamber of ancient stone, some parts carved from the living — or is it dead — rock, others assembled from mortared blocks. A rising spiral path winds around the inside of the vast shaft above you, connecting this platform to passages opening in the shaft walls, but it's broken in many places. In fact, it looks like only a single open tunnel entrance can be safely reached, about fifteen feet up from where you are standing.

In the centre of the chamber, a heap of broken blocks marks where parts of the structure have fallen from above and smashed to pieces, your rope dangles just above them. It doesn't feel safe, but then what does, for an adventurer?

You complete a circuit of the chamber and then return to the middle, cupping your hands around your mouth to shout up: "Master Cuthbert! Time to join me!"

The old academic makes a far bigger fuss of descending the rope than you did, and has to be helped with a second line, knotted around his body and paid out from above, but at last he reaches the bottom, joining the various bundles of supplies that Pyran has lowered down. Your plan is for Cuthbert to man your camp here, while you investigate the Catacombs.

Turn to 44

89.

You break open one of the stone-covered niches, the sound of your hammering echoing through the deep tombs.

Within you find a **silver ring** decorated with a ram's head, a tarnished **bronze mirror**, and twenty **golden coins** of such antiquity that they will be best sold as bullion.

> If you do not have the keyword *Necropolis*, turn to 50 now, otherwise, read on.

There seems to be nothing more here of value, except a few scattered bones, so you return to the passage (turn to 162)

90.

You pick your way along the passage, avoiding the fallen statue, and watching out for any more danger, but nothing moves. A little way further along, two narrow side-passages, little more than gaps in the crumbling stonework, lead left (turn to 12) and right (turn to 160), while the main passage continues deeper (turn to 196), and towards the entrance (turn to 210).

91.

You approach the entrance to Calligus' tomb with trepidation. The squat and rough arch is surrounded with skulls in niches. The severed heads seem to be screaming a silent warning at you.

If you have the keyword *Headstone* then there is nothing more for you within this tomb. You turn away instead (turn to 258).

Kellish runes surround the arch, scratched hastily into the stone. Those above the arch read "Calligus", but the others make no sense to you, even the ones you can decipher.

There is no need for light here, a ruddy glow issues from the arch, along with wisps of noisome vapour that drift towards your feet as if slyly seeking them out.

You are about to enter, when Cuthbert scuttles to your side. "Be careful, please. The other tombs may have been tests, I do not know, but this place will be more guarded than the rest, I am sure of it. Do not interfere with anything you do not understand before you are sure of your course, I beg you. I ... I do not wish to die alone in this place."

You can enter the tomb (turn to 22) or think better of it (turn to 258).

92.

You wade into the drowned passage, gasping as the shock of the freezing water hits you. Gain one level of Exhaustion.

Half way along the tunnel, the water level becomes so deep that you need to swim. Make a DF12 STRENGTH check, subtracting the AF of your armour from your STRENGTH. If you fail the roll you are forced to turn back (turn to 273), though you can try again if you wish.

If you manage to press on, swimming all the while, you come to a flooded chamber (turn to 128).

93.

If you have the keyword *Lychgate* turn to 100 now.

Cuthbert awaits you by the ruins of your camp, picking fragments of parchment out of the rubble. Your fire has been destroyed, and nothing remains with which to build another, but the monk has salvaged a few pieces of charcoal from the embers to replace his lost pen and ink.

It's cold here, and dark, with only the faint flicker of Pyran's lantern — its glass smashed and its reservoir nearly empty — to alleviate the sulphur glow.

"What are we to do?" Cuthbert moans, as you take a seat beside him on a lump of rock. "We will meet our death in these depths, I am sure of it, and there is only one way for us to go." He points with a wavering hand towards the tomb of Calligus.

"Calligus, what do you know?" you ask him.

He produces Aldwin's book, but fumbles with the pages, leaving black streaks of charcoal on the old parchment.

"I do not really know, only rumours, whispered in the halls of the monastery. They called it a god, or a demon; to the pagans those things were alike. It laid waste to the northern lands, I think, or across the sea ... as I said, only rumours. One thing is certain, it was an evil great enough that its name made its way through time to us."

It's a chilling warnings. Turn to 258.

94.

You enter this chamber warily, alert to a sound of rustling and buzzing that issues from within.

The light from the corridor illuminates a crawling and shifting mass in the centre of the room. Huge beetles, as large as dinner plates, swarm over a heap of long-dead bones and dust, like friars at a feast. To your horror you realise that the beetles are as dead as the bones, their hollow carapaces rattling with the dry husks of maggots.

You back-peddle, but some of the beetles surge to attack you. You must fight five of them at once (remember to split your DEFENCE between them).

> ***Corpse Beetles*** *(rank 1) — Att 10, Bite (D6,2) Def 3 MD 2 Eva 7 Ref 7 Ste 10 Per 5 AF 1 HP 3*
>
> *If the beetle rolls a 1 when attacking, the death maggots within inflict an extra 2 points of damage.*

If you lose turn to 195, if you win turn to 11. You can also flee to 223, but each of the beetles gets a free attack on you at 0 DEFENCE.

95.

You offer the bones to the cook (remove them from your inventory) who gives them a good look.

"Well, I can always use some fresh meat for the stew," he says.

He shuffles over to a large stone cauldron and tosses the bones in, before stirring them with a wooden plank. The bones rattle and clack as they go round and round — *click click click*!

"Hey, would you look at that." The skeleton reaches into the cauldron and plucks something out. "Always getting bits of rubbish in the stew, can't have that."

He tosses what he pulled out over to you, and you see that it is a **silver ring**, which you may take if you wish (assuming you have not already taken it), though perhaps better not to think too long about how it got there.

Now return to 136.

96.

You return to the scant shelter of your camp, wishing that Pyran was still here to welcome you with a warm fire and a cup of ale, with a fine tent for shelter.

Instead, there is only the grey bitter mountain wind, whistling across the rain-streaked rocks. A few supplies, wrapped in canvas and stuck into the gap between two of the stones, are the best you have for comfort.

There's still enough supplies remaining that you can take two **rations** or **torches** with you back down the shaft (only two items total), but there's no way to get an adequate rest up here.

When you are done, you descend back into the catacombs (turn to 44).

97.

You may leave surplus items in your camp under Cuthbert's care, or recover items you have left here before. Make a note of any items you leave in the camp using the box below (or on a spare sheet of paper if you prefer), crossing out any that you return to your inventory.

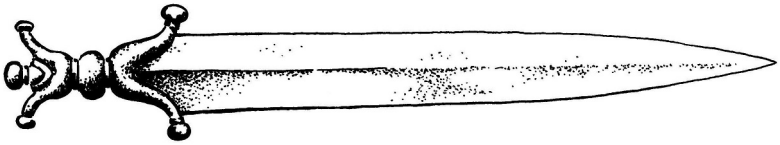
When you are done:

- If you have the keyword *Cremation* turn to 258
- Otherwise, if you have the keyword *Dolmen* turn to 54
- Otherwise turn to 44

98.

Your death is a foregone conclusion. Even the First King and all his court could not fully overcome Calligus, you are much less of an obstacle. One blow of the mighty chain lays you low, crushing your bones as easily as a threshing flail crushes corn. Your head is separated from your spine, and sent spinning into one of the chamber's corners, soon to be another skull amongst many others. Your body fares little better; Calligus crushes it with a twist of its foul foot as it shoulders its way out of the chamber. Killing Cuthbert does not even require it to break stride, it is the rest of the world that must fear it now.

YOUR ADVENTURE ENDS HERE



99.

As soon as you bend to wrestle with the bronze hasp, the air fills with a desperate wailing. Blue ghosts claw their way through the walls, peasants and goodwives, tinkers and farmers, still in their ancient garb. The host of spirits claw at you, begging you to think again, to put down the chain, to flee the Catacombs and never return.

Resist a strength 12 magical attack. If you fail, you lose 2d8 HP, ignoring armour. If this attack kills you, turn to 253.

You grit your teeth and ignore the spirit's supplication. Straining, you pull the heavy pin from the hasp and let the chain loose. At once, it snakes away through the hole with a deafening rattle. When it does, the ghosts give one last moan and vanish as they came.

Gain the keyword *Zombie* and turn to 81 ticking a box.

100.

When you seek Cuthbert out, he appears to be packing what remains of his notes and research. The final drop of the floor destroyed your fire, and much of your makeshift camp, but the warm amber glow of the giant lantern gives him enough light to work by, and it appears that he is getting ready to leave.

"What are you doing?" you ask him.

He looks up, but doesn't stop stuffing papers into his satchel. "Leaving, of course. We should never have come here, I know that now. Oh, cursed be my curiosity! Abbot Oswald always said it would be the death of me. Well, I've no intention of proving him right. We've lit the lamp, and that should be enough to get us out of here, as I understand it. We shouldn't meddle any further with Calligus or the King, or anything else."

"What do you know of Calligus?" you ask.

Cuthbert humphs, tugging on one earlobe in apparent distraction. Eventually he answers, though still packing rations into his back as he does so: "I do not really know, only rumours, whispered in the halls of the monastery. They called it a god, or a demon; to the pagans those things were alike. It laid waste to the northern lands, I think, or across the sea ... as I said, only rumours. One thing is certain, it was an evil great enough that its name made its way through time to us."

He fixes you with his eye. "We do not have to venture there, and we should not."

It is a chilling warning: turn to 258.

101.

You are at the entrance to a dark passage, that drives away into the living rock from the main shaft. A circular capstone, half again your own height, has been rolled aside from the opening, so that it rests on the masonry ramp like a coin balanced on a bannister. The side of the capstone facing you is polished and convex, inscribed with a single rune of ancient Kell.

If you wish to enter the passage turn to 129.

The spiral ramp curves back down to the cavern floor (turn to 44), but the way further up is blocked by a drastic collapse, that must have sent tons of stone down into the darkness.

102.

You make your way towards the fitful glow of your camp fire, but something makes you pause. The shadows of the echoing shaft seem even darker than before, and the air is thick with particles of dust that catch the pale light from the lens above. Your hackles rise, something is wrong.

"Cuthbert! Beware!" you shout.

Your warning seems to be just in time. The shadows thicken into demonic shapes, tattered and malice-filled spectres slipped from their prisons, that rush towards you with claws outstretched.

"God's blood!" Cuthbert gasps.

There are seven of the attacking creatures, which you must fight. To prevent them from outnumbering you (in which case you will be attacked from all sides), you will need to keep moving.

> ***Dust Wraith*** *(rank 4) — Att 14, Touch (d10,4) Def 4 MD 11 Eva 4 Ref 6 Ste 10 Per 13 AF 0 HP 10*
>
> *Non-magical weapons inflict half damage, and physical spells have no effect.*
> *At the start of each round, test your REFLEXES on 2d10. If you succeed, you must fight one wraith this round. If you roll under half your REFLEXES (rounding down) you must fight two. If you fail the roll, you must fight four, and one will attack from your rear (0 DEFENCE).*
> *Cuthbert tries his best to aid you. At the start of each round (before testing reflexes) choose if you gain +2 REFLEXES, +2 ATTACK, or +2 DEFENCE for the round, from the distractions he provides.*

If you survive turn to 57, otherwise turn to 166.

103.

Ceawlin's ghost does not stay its spectral blade a second time, but plunges it through your heart, stealing away your life as surely as a physical one might.

"Foolish," Ceawlin says, to your slumping corpse. "It did not have to be this way. It seems you were a fool after all."

YOUR ADVENTURE ENDS HERE

104.

To proceed, you must have a source of light (see the introduction). When you leave this area your light source will be used up (removed from your inventory). If you use a light providing spell, it will expire at that same time. If you don't have a source of light, you must leave the passage (turn to 144) now.

The stonework of this passage is piecemeal and uneven, as if hastily constructed. Dust trickles down between the flat stones that support the low roof and many of the wall blocks have collapsed, you can see why the entrance door did not open properly.

A passage strikes deeper into the mountain (turn to 210) while an exit leads back to the main shaft (turn to 54).

105.

At the top of the shaft is a cramped chamber, its further end blocked by a collapse of silt and broken stone. The floor here crackles under your feet, as your steps crush delicate spikes of flowstone.

In the middle of the chamber, a polished and trepanned skull sits on top of a triangular piece of stone. You are naturally suspicious, and not at all surprised when the skull rises into the air to attack you! You act first, but the space is too cramped for the use of a shield or two-handed weapon.

> ***Flying Skull*** *(rank 4) — Att 16, Bite (d10,4) Def 15 MD 8 Eva 7 Ref 1 Ste 15 Per 12 AF 0 HP 3*
>
> *On each odd numbered round (including the first) the skull belches a gout of flame with SPEED 12, inflicting 1d6+6 damage (reduced by AF), in addition to its melee attack.*

If you defeat the skull, you can take the **triangular keystone** it was sitting on (assuming you have not done so before), which is marked with a curious sigil, before descending the shaft (turn to 107). If not, your remains will join it in this obscure vigil.

YOUR ADVENTURE ENDS HERE

106.

Gain the keyword *Necropolis*

You prove to be a match for the ancient legionaries, and defeat them both. Their disarticulated bones and armour pieces collapse to the ground with a clatter that echoes down the tunnels.

As the bones fall apart, you spy a **silver amulet** that must have been lodged inside one of the creatures. Taking it up, you see that it is engraved with sorcerous runes.

The amulet functions as the Abaraxus Stone (DW rulebook, p142). Each time you gain HP while resting, you recover one additional HP.

You can now return to the entrance (turn to 78) or proceed down the passage (turn to 47).

107.

The shaft appears to have been caused by a movement of the earth, or a collapse of masonry, possibly caused by the dripping water. Either way, it gives access to a small space that might be part of a different part of the catacombs. Behind you, an alcove leads back to the flooded passage (turn to 273).

As you peer up the shaft you hear a whispered voice, apparently just beside your ear, though there is nothing there. The voice says, *Be careful, danger awaits above*. You wonder if this might be the voice of the First King guiding you, but there is something about it that sends chills up your spine.

To climb the shaft you must make a DF13 REFLEXES check. If you fail, you take 1d6 damage (-2 if you are wearing armour). You can try as often as you like. If you make it to the top, turn to 105.

108.

You take a closer look at the upset skulls, holding your light higher, only to realise that they have been vandalised. Sets of initials have been incised into the old bones; here a J.C., there a Flavius N. You think you recognise Selentine names. Did legionaries come here in some time long past? You return to the corridor (turn to 134).

109.

You move past the alcoves where the skeletal legionaries were stationed, but nothing stirs now in the darkness. You can head deeper (turn to 47), or return to the entrance (turn to 162).

110.

You slay the revenant Conoc, if one can slay that which is already dead. As the spirit fades it gasps, "Damned are you for this. The Catacombs will be your tomb, as they are for so many others."

The empty skull falls to the floor and the whole chamber trembles beneath your feet! Dust showers from the ceiling, followed by blocks of stone, as some tremendous process begins, shaking the stone, and echoing from the main shaft behind you.

Turn to 132.

111.

You enter a low, vaulted chamber. Empty niches on the walls probably once bore lamps or lanterns. In the centre of the chamber a massy plinth supports a thick-walled stone sarcophagus. You approach it cautiously, and see that it has been broken open, and the contents scattered. Fragments of bone litter the floor, and bending down to examine them you realise that the bones have been cracked upon and gnawed upon.

You wonder if you are to face giant rats, but there is no movement amongst the bones, and some of the marks look awfully like the cuts of blades ... You can help yourself to a **broken femur** if you wish.

Four passages lead out of the chamber, one towards the entrance (turn to 47), one left (turn to 136), one right (turn to 278), and one straight ahead (turn to 149). A rhythmic banging sound echoes from the left-hand passage.

112.

If you have the keyword *Haunt* turn to 142. Otherwise, gain the keyword *Haunt* and read on.

You approach the source of the orange glow and discover two enormous panels of amber stone set into the walls, each taller than a man. It can't be real amber, no lump so large could possibly exist, but it *looks* like amber.

Within each block, a figure is trapped — hunched, cadaverous, wrapped in rags and tatters so that it's hard to be sure exactly what you are seeing through the distortions of the amber. The two shapes are mirror images, curled up like larvae. Looking closer — cautiously — you think that one of the figures has a goat's skull for a head.

You are sure the hideous things must be effigies, constructed from animal parts, but they fill you with dread. Whispering voices seem to fill the air, issuing from cracks in the stone: *Release us! Free us! Unleash us!*

You clap your hands to your ears, but the whispers continue.

Resist a strength 10 fright attack (*roll 2d10+your rank. if you roll 10 or less, you fail*). If you fail, you gain two levels of Exhaustion. Now turn to 142.

113.

If you have the keyword *Funeral* turn to 165.

The long winding corridor widens here, opening up into an alcove on the left side, its floor level raised above that of the corridor by a small step. A few bones are scattered on this platform.

Set into the side walls of the alcove are two jutting stones clearly intended to be rests for candles, judging by the traces of old wax that stain them. If you have two **candles** you could place them on the stones and light them (turn to 51).

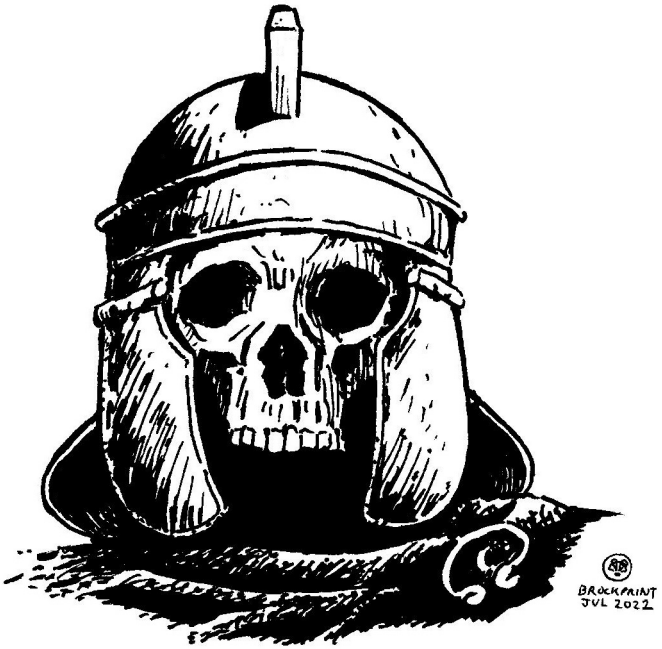
The passage leads out towards the entrance (turn to 143), and deeper into the mountain (turn to 42).

114.

This chamber is a little higher in level than the flooded pool room, and this seems to have kept it perfectly dry. Dust coats every surface in thick layers, so that your footsteps cause it to swirl and rise.

> Unless you are immune to poison you must roll under your STRENGTH on 2d6. If you fail, you gain one level of Exhaustion from inhaling the dust. Do this each time you enter this passage.

The chamber contains three stone sarcophagi. The top of one is broken open, and it has filled with dust. If you wish to feel around inside the open coffin turn to 264. If you would prefer to heave open one of the sealed coffins turn to 232. You can also head out of the chamber (turn to 58)



115.

The curving passageway here is lit by a soft amber glow that pulses from somewhere deeper into the rock, ebbing and flowing like slow waves. It is almost hypnotic, and you are careful not to allow yourself to be overcome by it.

A low gap between the massive rocks in the left-hand wall appears to lead into some sort of small space (turn to 5), while the passage continues left (turn to 184) and right (turn to 71).

116.

You feel around in the darkness, hoping to discover something of interest by touch alone. Small skittering things swarm over your hands, like a sea of beetles.

Make a DF 10 PERCEPTION check (using 2d10). If you succeed your hand encounters something hidden in the dark, roll 1d6 to see what you find.

- 1-2 a **flanged bronze key** in the shape of a skull
- 3-4 a **lump of amber**
- 5-6 what appears to be a selentine **gladius** (d8,3)

If you fail, you are bitten by the invisible beetles, lose 1HP. You can try again as many times as you like (although you can take each item only once), light something (turn to 230), or crawl out again (turn to 67).

117.

The light of the lantern, focused through the great lens, falls in a beam upon the amber tomb of the First King. At its touch the hard stone melts away as if it had never existed, until the amber sarcophagus lies open as before, but there is nothing but dust within — times does not so easily give up its prize.

If you already have the **first king's crown**, you can place it back into the sarcophagus, if you wish.

If you have the **dead king's heart**, you may place it in the sarcophagus instead (turn to 274).

If you have not taken the crown, it lies atop the remains of the King, its metal uncorrupted. You can take the crown (turn to 48), or leave it where it lies (turn to 258).

118.

"Ask me your question, shade."

The glowing skull answers: "When I lived, my King gave me the honour of being his war leader against a great foe, the first of those to be condemned to these depths. If anything survives from those days, it must be the memory of the dangers we fought, and the victories we won.

"So here is my question, what was the name of the foe I defeated?"

If you have the keyword *Crypt* turn to 269, otherwise you have no answer for dead Conoc, and must instead attack the skull (turn to 263) or head back down the corridor (turn to 134).

119.

"Rather you than me," Cuthbert says, peering nervously over the lip of the vast hole into which you are about to descend.

Pyran, the boy you hired at the edge of the mountains, busies himself securing the rope, which he has wound many times around one of the half-buried blocks of stone that jut out around the edge of the drop, then scurries back down to your makeshift camp.

"Tell me again what I will find below," you ask Cuthbert.

The scholar tugs at his earlobe. "The riches of a whole kingdom? The legendary Catacombs of Dust? If we are lucky, the lost crown itself?"

"More specifically?"

"Oh!" Cuthbert has the grace to look embarrassed, and fetches out the crumbling book that gave rise to this whole expedition — the diary of Bishop Aldwin, the only man you know who claimed to have both found the Catacombs, and dared their interior.

Cuthbert reads from the book: "A great chamber, fully the size of the nave of our cathedral, from which emerge divers passages, many sealed by portals which neither my prayers nor my magic could open. Here also a mighty lens, as it were, cut from crystal, suspended beyond my reach."

Pyran returns with the satchel of supplies you have prepared, and a sturdy oversized lantern. You have prepared as well as you can, now is the time to brave the depths. There is no vast quest here, only the desire to penetrate a mystery that has long-haunted the wild-lands of Ellesland, and perhaps return with treasure in your hands.

Turn to 123 to descend into the shaft.

120.

Gain the keyword *Crypt*

You enter a concealed chamber, shaped a little like a beehive. Dominating the chamber is what appears to be a massive block of amber, as large as a man. You have never seen its like. Even though amber is less valuable than other gems, there is surely a fortune here.

You peer more closely at the amber, and see that a name has been inscribed on the outside: "Ludic". As you study the name, you notice a shadow within the block. Raising your light, you make out the shadow of a body *inside* the amber, and feel a chill pass through you. How is this possible?

Whatever the answer, you think better of interfering, and head out of the chamber (turn to 214).

121.

Test your EVASION against a SPEED of 12. If you pass turn to 125, otherwise 85.

122.

You set yourself to the chains and wheels, hauling on the mechanisms. The lantern is as large as you, and surely heavier, but it responds to your effort; it must be balanced on some counterweight you cannot see.

The lantern turns as it rises, and the great lens descends, the two moving in an odd harmony, like skaters on a frozen pond. As they come into alignment, the lens appears to suck in the light from the lantern, and cast it out again in a focused beam. By adjusting the wheels you can direct the beam to various locations around the chamber.

Choose where to aim the beam:

- **Illuminating the amber block** in the centre of the chamber
- **Illuminating the amber pane** that is set into the wall
- **Illuminating the tomb entrance**

And then return to 258 to see the results.

123.

You take a firm grip of the rope, hoping that Pyran has tied it off well, and start your descent. Showers of loose peaty soil cascade past you as you clamber over the lip; it seems to take only a moment for the bright circle of sky to contract above you as you drop down into the darkness.

The entrance to the Catacombs is a vast shaft, piercing straight down into the raw mountain rock like the wound left by a spear thrust. After half-a-dozen yards, the shaft widens so that you are no longer close to the wall, forcing you to descend hand over hand into the depths.

The shaft opens into a cavern, far taller than it is wide, of dark grey striated stone. Lower down, openings pierce the sides of the cavern at random heights, most of them sealed by slabs of engraved stone. The openings are connected with an irregular path of slabs and steps jutting out of the interior wall, though from your rope perch you can see that the route is broken in many places.

A screech and clang makes you look up, to see the lit lantern being lowered towards you on a second rope. It inches its way down in jerks, as Pyran plays the rope out, and eventually passes a couple of feet from your head.

As the lantern swings below you, it illuminates a massive structure suspended below you, a circular window of multi-coloured glass hanging from dust-shrouded chains. The stained glass depicts a single staring eye surrounded by rays of light. What it means, you do not know, but it fills you with a frisson of fear.

The lantern continues down until it comes to rest on a flat stone floor, and you descend to join it, placing your weight cautiously on the cold rock before letting go of the rope.

You have entered the catacombs. Turn to 88.

124.

You produce the **silver mirror** and confront Flavius with his own reflection. You expect some sort of shocked revelation, but the skeletal centurion merely admires himself in the cloudy surface.

"I've suffered from my time in these depths, it's true," he says, when you ask him if he is not unsettled by what he sees, "but I am still a fine son of Selentium."

You check your own reflection, just in case the mirror shows some sort of illusion, but you only see your own face, though it is misty and indistinct. You feel you need some *better* sort of reflecting surface if you want to reveal the truth to Flavius.

Turn to 19.

125.

The slab crashes deafeningly to the ground, smashing into the back of the skull statue and filling the air with a choking cloud of dust and mortar. Bones, scattered by the impact, clatter around the floor before rolling slowly to a stop. Turn to 10.

126.

With one last effort you dislodge a key stone in the blockage, and the whole mass tumbles down around your feet. The air fills with dust, but the dust is quickly drawn up into the crack by a sudden breeze; you were right about the crack acting as a chimney.

The flow of air also draws up the sulphorous mist issuing from Calligus' bloated breath. It is not enough to clear the air entirely, but you can breathe more easily than before.

> You no longer suffer a level of Exhaustion from the effects of the gas while on the lowest level.

Return to 77.

127.

As you approach the noisome bulk of Calligus, the demon lifts its left hand, causing the bronze chain still manacled to his wrist to screech as it drags across the floor. It opens the hand, revealing a palm as large as a cartwheel, and you see the glint of amber.

The demon roars insidious whispers into your ear. *See, I have what you need, as I promised.*

Peering closer, despite yourself, you see that the demon's fist contains three **lumps of amber** and a **flanged bronze key** in the shape of a winged skull.

These are all you need to make your escape. Take them and go with my blessing. The monstrous form chortles at this joke, the vast belly heaving and trembling with malefic mirth.

You can take the items if you wish. Then return to 81 and pick another option.

128.

You swim into a chamber almost entirely flooded by black water. Luckily there is a small gap at the top that still contains some fouled air, but the piercing cold means you can't stay for long.

If you wish to leave, you can swim back to the main passage (turn to 273). If not, you can try diving down to the bottom and feeling around by touch.

Make a DF14 STRENGTH check. If you succeed, you swim down to the bottom (turn to 60), otherwise you take 1d6 damage, and must try again, or get out while you can.

129.

To proceed, you must have a source of light (see the introduction). When you leave this area your light source will be used up (removed from your inventory). If you use a light providing spell, it will expire at that same time. If you don't have a source of light, you must return to the ramp (turn to 101) now.

A gloomy passage runs almost die-straight into the mountain, with only a slight uphill slope beneath your feet. Your light reveals innumerable niches carved into the walls, each with a single sightless skull, or the remains of them at least, resting within. A hundred pairs of dead eyes, remnants of some conquered army, surely, watch each step you take.

Resist a strength 9 fright attack (*roll 2d10+your rank. if you roll 9 or less, you fail*). If you fail, you flee from the passage (turn to 87).

The only only option available, other than leaving the passage (turn to 87), is to push deeper (turn to 259).

130.

As you exit the passage, you hear once more the grinding of stone. *Please*, you think *let it not be another collapse!*

You rush towards the camp, shouting for Cuthbert to take shelter, but to your relief no great tremor or change in geometry overtakes the Catacomb. Rather, the grinding proves to be more passages opening. You watch as the circular capstones roll aside under their own power, until a total of six entrances have been revealed!

"More tombs!" Cuthbert exclaims. "It seems that the First King reveals his secrets."

"Or our doom," you mutter to yourself.

"Look here," Cuthbert calls over from one of the new openings, "this one isn't a tomb at all."

You join Cuthbert in the newly revealed chamber and see that he's correct. It's not a passage, but a large alcove, dominated by an enormous bronze lamp, nearly five foot tall and two foot on each side. An equally large ring at the top connects to a verdigris-stained chain that vanishes *into* the rock above.

You try to open the lantern's grated door, but it appears to be locked.

"What could anyone need with such a vast lantern?" Cuthbert muses.

"What could you possibly use to light it?" You reply.

Cuthbert presses his face against the side of the lantern, peering through the openings.

"Nothing mundane," he says. "There is no candle, no wick, no reservoir for oil, only an open dish marked with arcane runes, which I cannot translate from here. This is another mystery to solve, amongst so man others!"

You return to the main chamber (turn to 201) for now.

131.

You give up on your attempt, allowing the despair of a life forgotten to wash over you. Gain the keyword *Pyramid*, and then make your way back to the main chamber (turn to 54), ticking a box, there is nothing more to do here.

132.

You flee back down the passage, with the whole world shaking around you. Skulls fly from their niches, snapping and clacking at you, accompanied by showers of dust — nor does the tumult end when you burst back into the main shaft, for the whole Catacomb is shaking as if struck by an earthquake.

You only have a moment to register that the floor of the main chamber, where poor Cuthbert has his camp, is moving *away* from you, dropping deeper into the earth, before you realise that the platform at the entrance to the tunnel has collapsed, and you are running into thin air!

You careen down a slipping pile of falling stones and dislodged mortar, which carries you to the new floor level in a welter of rolling stones and blocks. Only then does the shaking and grinding come to a stop, allowing you to gingerly climb back to your feet.

Expire any light sources you were using, and turn to 68.

133.

You hesitate as you approach the hasp, sensing that something is wrong. Crouching down, with your hand over your mouth to keep out the stench, you wave away the sulphur fumes to get a clear view of the floor. You see marks laid into the stone. Not wards, but something sorcerous nevertheless — a magical trap. You would do well to seek out some form of protection before you trigger it, that's for sure! Return to 244.

134.

It seems that the eerie obsession with skulls continues in this narrow passage, though many of the niches here are empty, and others appear to have their contents randomly upset. If you wish to examine the skulls more closely, turn to 108.

Halfway along, the left wall of the passage has collapsed into a heap of rubble and dust. Pointed stakes, bound in green copper, suggest that some ancient trap was activated by a previous visitor, perhaps Bishop Aldwin himself. Just beyond the old trap, a larger alcove (turn to 214) opens up in the right-hand wall.

The passage runs in one direction towards the skull statue chamber (turn to 259), and the other deeper into the mountain (turn to 72).

135.

Cuthbert looks up from his work as you approach, and puts down the fragment of broken masonry he was holding. He looks exhausted.

"Ahh, there you are. I've been trying to make sense of what's happened to us. Why did the floor descend? Why did these new chambers get revealed? It wasn't a collapse, an accident, this was designed."

"I answered the ghost's question," you say.

Cuthbert tugs at his earlobe. "Yes, that's true, but why provide a way to go deeper into what is supposed to be a prison for the evil dead? If the passages had not opened, we would have been stuck up above ... with a way to escape. It's almost as if there's some lesson to learn."

"But what?"

"That one's for you. You had better dare another entrance and find out."

Turn to 248

136.

You enter a long vault, lined with many ancient niches and alcoves, where numerous dead were interred. No trace now remains to tell you whether these were foes or allies of the First King, for every tomb has been broken open and raided for its contents.

In the middle of the vault, using a low sarcophagus as workbench, a long skeletal legionary is at work preparing *food*, if long-decayed human remains can be considered food. The cook whistles as he works, cutting long-bones into sections with a cleaver, blowing spectral air through his exposed teeth with a ghastly whistling sound.

If the cook is surprised at your appearance he shows no sign of it, merely nodding towards the end of his table, indicating that you should help yourself to a **grotesque meal** in the form of a mummified human hand and a scattering of tiny foot bones.

Leaning against the wall is a **copper tray** that the cook uses as a serving platter. You can take this if you wish.

You can beat a hasty retreat (turn to 111), talk to the cook (turn to 13), or draw a weapon and attack the abomination (turn to 212).

Alternatively, if you have some bones (for example a **skull**, **broken femur** or some **fragile bones**) you can offer them to the cook (turn to 95).

137.

Gain the keyword *Wraith*

You drop the urn and draw your weapons as the agonised spirit lunges towards you. You must fight it.

> ***Tornrait*** *(rank 3) — Att 13, Claws (d8,4) Def 5 MD 11 Eva 4 Ref 6 Ste 6 Per 10 AF 4 HP 10*
>
> *Non-magical weapons and physical spells have half effect. Air Elemental attacks have double effect.*

If you defeat the poor creature, you can continue along the passage (turn to 252). If it defeats you turn to 224.

138.

Gain the keyword *Kokh*

You take the sword and advance on the amber prison, thrusting the blade two-handed into the stone. As you make the blow, a dozen skeletal arms burst from the crack, cutting at you. The black fingers scar your flesh — reduce your LOOKS by one permanently as you suffer the black king's revenge.

You ignore the blows and sink the blade home. A terrible scream, of rage not pain, rings through the darkness of the tomb, and then goes silent.

Mercy was not the First King's lesson here.

You may take the **amber sword** (d6+3,5,magical) if you wish, then turn to 54, marking a box.

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139.

You pick your way down a narrow winding passage that opens out into an ossuary, a place set aside for the storage of bones.

Not quiet bones, however! As your light falls across the chamber, you see a dozen animated skeletons, each armoured and armed in the fashion of an ancient Selentine legionary. They appear to have been occupied in playing dice with knucklebones, but when they see you, they rise and draw their weapons.

> If you have the keyword *Ossuary*, the legionaries recognise you as an ally of Flavius, and do not attack. You decide to head back down the passage (turn to 47). Otherwise, read on.

The cadavers advance en-masse, clashing their swords against their shields. You can choose to flee by turning to 268. Otherwise you must fight them, though you can use the narrow doorway to restrict their numbers.

You must fight seven skeletons in total, three at a time (remember to split your DEFENCE between them). When one skeleton falls, another will take their place.

> ***Skeletal Legionaries*** *(rank 1) — Att 11, Sword (d8,4) Def 5 MD 1 Eva 3 Ref 6 Ste 13 Per 7 AF 3 (5 vs. stabbing) HP 15 (shield)*

If you fall to the legionaries' attack turn to 215. If you overcome them turn to 6.

140.

The passage ahead of you flickers with orange light, issuing from further into the mountain. It's the first light you have seen in this place that you did not bring yourself. Could there be people down here, somehow? Has Baron Steno somehow found another way down?

The walls of the passage bear the remains of ancient frescoes, though large sections are missing.

If you wish to examine the frescoes turn to 243. Otherwise you can head deeper (turn to 112), or return to the main chamber (turn to 54).

141.

Your sleep is restless, disturbed by dreams of the vast depths below you, and the imagined noises of approaching warriors bearing Steno's arms.

You dream that you are alone in the nave of a Cathedral, standing before the reredos screen. The blank faces of dead saints gaze down at you in judgement from either side. Behind you, there is the sound of footsteps, slow, heavy, dragging, as if a giant is easing its way towards you. You want to turn, but you do not dare.

Hot breath gusts past you, charnel, stinking of rotting meat and fresh blood. Alongside them is a voice, oily, sensual, utterly terrifying, that appears to come from the air right beside you, as if the giant is stooping to whisper sweetly in your ear.

Do not waver, the voice says. *Riches undreamt of lie below. The Crown, the Crown is the key. Push on, push down.*

You awake in a cold sweat, the details of your nightmare fading like clearing mist. Turn to 209, ticking a box.

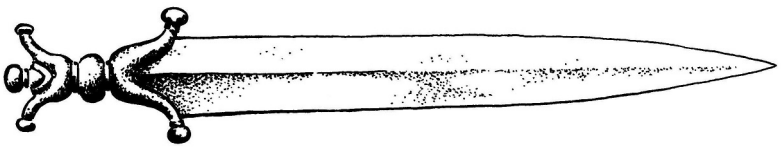
142.

The two grotesque figures are still hunched in their amber prisons here, but you hurry past, refusing to listen to their whispers. One passage leads towards the entrance (turn to 140) while two more lead left (turn to 234) and right (turn to 46).

143.

Gain the keyword *Grave*.

The spectre is gone, but its broken sarcophagus remains, leaning against both walls of the corridor. You squeeze nervously between the two halves, expecting some new horror, but nothing arises to menace you. You can head towards the entrance (turn to 262) or go deeper (turn to 113).



144.

The entrance to this passage doesn't stand fully open, when the capstone rolled aside it appears to have gotten stuck, leaving only a narrow space for you to squeeze through.

The Kellish rune for the letter **B** is marked above the entrance.

> If you have the keyword *Tomb* you have already delved into this passage, and there is nothing more to be done here. You must turn back to the main chamber.

If you wish to enter the passage turn to 104.

Behind you, Cuthbert studies his book in the middle of the chamber (turn to 54).

145.

Gain the keyword *Headstone*

You roll away from Calligus' furious grasp, scrabbling through the toxic murk of the demon's breath. Calligus slams its open hand on the ground behind you, causing blocks of stone to rain from the vault roof and smash into the floor, but you are beyond its reach.

Calligus roars with rage. No words this time, only a wave of psychic wrath that knocks you from your feet a second time. Then, finally, you are scrambling your way through the arch into the entrance passage. On every side the great chains flex and thrum as Calligus tries to tear them free, but the ancient bindings hold.

You spill out into main chamber, a gust of flame and smoke at your back. There is clearly no going back into there!

You stand up, as Cuthbert comes to your side, and show him the heart. His face pales, but when you tell him where it came from and what it is, he forgets his fear.

"The King's heart, can it be? And look, it seems as if it still beats. What does this mean?"

You shake your head, still wondering that yourself. "I am not sure. Some sort of salvation? It vexed the beast, that is certain."

You limp over to the fallen rocks beside the King's tomb, and sink gratefully down to take stock. Turn to 258.

146.

"Impossible!" Acteus gasps, as your attack brings him low. "That I should be defeated by a mere human!"

The dark king dissolves back into smoke, that retreats into the amber prison once more, curling back into the foetal form it held before. You have defeated Acteus, but learned little, though the **amber sword** (d6+3,5,magical) is yours to keep.

Turn to 54.

147.

The passage here rises slightly, so that the water-level recedes, a welcome change, though the old rock is still damp and encrusted with blooms of white crystal — as fragile as lace — which break off as you pass. You can help yourself to a **white crystal** if you wish.

The passage terminates in a small chamber, where a single empty sarcophagus — filled to the brim with water — sits under the point of a dripping stalactite. On the open floor beside the tomb is a face down skeleton. You assume that it was the inhabitant of the tomb, and approach cautiously, but a closer examination convinces you that it is the remains of a former adventurer, like yourself.

You consider the many questions this raises. How did he come to be here? What killed him? Most importantly, does this mean that the catacombs *reset* in some manner, restoring the floor level to the original and allowing you to escape? You have no answers.

A mouldering backpack contains a few of the dead man's belongings. You can help yourself to any of the following that you not already taken: a **torch**, a **dagger** (d6,3), a purse of **50 florins**, a coil of **rope**, and a **lump of amber** he must have taken from somewhere else in the tomb.

Once you are done, turn to 58.

148.

If you have the keyword *Yew* turn to 117 now, otherwise read on.

The light of the lantern, focused through the great lens, falls in a beam upon the amber tomb of the First King. At its touch the hard stone melts away as if it had never existed, until the amber sarcophagus lies open, exposing the body within to the touch of time.

For a moment you look upon an uncorrupted corpse. A white burial shroud lies open, revealing armour of engraved bronze, a cloak of peacock feathers, and a golden crown set with jewels. The King lies with his arms folded as if in prayer, his beard combed and his eyes closed. Only a brown stain on the shroud, and a rent in the fine armour, just over the heart, betrays that the King is dead.

Then, all at once, the ancient body begins to crumble. The rich bronze armour blooms with verdigris, the green stain spreading before your widening eyes, and the grey beard begins to curl and fray. Cuthbert lets out a gasp of alarm and makes the sign of the cross, but his prayer has little effect on the ravening hand of time.

You can grab the king's crown (turn to 48), stand back to watch what happens (turn to 56), or rush to the chains to move the lantern (turn to 179).

149.

You are deep in the labyrinth of charnel passages. Broken niches and alcoves line the walls, and scraps of bone and stone litter the floor. An archway leads into a chamber a little way ahead (turn to 200), while a passage winds towards the entrance (turn to 111).

150.

The sound of splashing water is louder here, as if there is a pool of open water nearby. Here, the passage has been worn nearly smooth by the trickle of water over the stone, which glistens in the light as you approach.

The passage leads deeper (turn to 58), and out towards the exit (turn to 27).

151.

This chamber is almost drowning in amber light, which appears to suffuse the ancient stone and hang heavy in the air. You can't see a source, no fire, lamp, or crystal, and yet the room feels warm, almost as if you are standing in the sunlight on a summer day.

> If you have the keyword *Judgement*, there is nothing more to see here. Turn to 184 now. Otherwise, gain the keyword *Judgement* and read on.

A voice in the brightness says, "Welcome. It is unusual to see a traveller here, in these depths."

You draw your weapon, though you can't see anything to attack beyond a vague shadow in the light.

The voice says, "No need for that. We are not enemies. Humans are endlessly amusing. Here, I have a gift for you."

The shadow moves, and a weight appears in your hand. You look down to see that you are clutching a **ruby**.

"You like that? Yes. Sadly I cannot give you more. But my King rests in the next chamber, and he may also have a gift for you. You should go there and release him."

You make to answer, but feel that the presence has vanished. You decide to return to the passage (turn to 2).

152.

You take out a **lump of amber** and place it in the dish. At once, the dish, and the lump, flicker with golden light, like the kindling of a fire. You step back, but the light fails to explode into life.

You guess that the light needs more fuel than a single piece of amber to power it.

If you have three **lumps of amber**, you can place all three into the dish by turning to 199. If you don't then there is likely only one place left to find one — Calligus' tomb. Turn to 258.

153.

You try in vain to fend off the flying skull, but its snapping jaws rip at your throat and bring you down. As you slip into the dark fold of death the skull cackles: *All is dust, and all comes to dust!*

YOUR ADVENTURE ENDS HERE

154.

You have barely ventured into the tomb of the warrior, edging through the rough archway, when an apparition rises from the sarcophagus. No demented shade, but an ancient warrior, girded with mail and helm, a war-sword in his grip. The ghost carries a dim illumination that, for a moment, drives back the noxious miasma of Calligus' tomb (you do not suffer the 1 Exhaustion from the sulphur cloud while in this chamber).

"I am Ceawlin," says the ghost, in what seems to be flawless Bachille, "and you are a fool who has delved too deep, and yet, it is possible that you may also be the salvation of those of us who keep undying vigil. It remains to be seen."

You cautiously raise your hands. "And how will you know?"

The ghost raises its sword, and moves to attack you. "By testing you in combat, as is the way of things."

You must fight five rounds with Ceawlin's ghost. If you have won the fight, or have not lost before the five rounds is over, Ceawlin will acknowledge your worth.

> ***Ceawlin*** *(rank 7) — Att 17, Spectral Sword (d10+1,6) Def 10 MD 10 Eva 3 Ref 7 Ste 13 Per 11 AF 4 HP 18*
>
> *At the start of each round you may test your REFLEXES. If you succeed you take cover behind the tomb and gain +2 DEFENCE. If you fail, you suffer -2D instead.*
> *If a blow from Ceawlin would reduce you to 0HP or less, he stays his hand, and the fight is over unless you choose to continue it. He will not spare you a second time, however.*

If you survive the trial turn to 40. If you force the ghost to strike a fatal blow against you turn to 103.

155.

You are right on the creature's tail as it dashes towards a cracked wall with a narrow hole near the base. You are certain that you will catch it, but before you can there is a loud crack, and a smell of woodsmoke, and the creature transforms into the shape of a stoat, and dashes through the tiny hole.

You pull up short and glare at the hole, it's far too small for you to get through. From the other side of the wall you hear mocking laughter, and an oddly human voice that declares: "Clumsy slow human! Crackmarrow has you beaten. Lie down and die, and I will make feast on your bones."

If you can cast *Transformation*, you can turn into a rat and follow Crackmarrow through the gap to 217. You can achieve the same with *Intangibility*, *Fissure*, *Vaporize*, or *Teleport*. If you can't cast any of these your only choice is to shed your armour, backpack, shield, and any two-handed weapons. If you choose to do this, you can crawl through the hole (turn to 217).

If you don't do any of these things, turn to 55.

156.

You push yourself deeper into the freezing pool, around the side of the sunken tomb, towards a glint of metal. It proves to be a massive bronze cauldron, green with corrosion and filled with silt and stones. Moving the cauldron is impossible, but if you can hold your breath long enough, you can dive into and see what it contains.

> Make a DF16 STRENGTH check. If you fail, you take 1d4 damage, and gain a level of Exhaustion. If this reduces you to zero Health, turn to 17, otherwise read on.

You haul yourself into the cauldron and dig blindly through the muck. It's all you can do to grab something before the breath bursts out of you.

Roll 1d6 to see what you find:

- **1-2** A tarnished **silver ring**
- **3-4** A lucent **moonstone**
- **5** A corroded and useless dagger
- **6** A **white runestone**. While you carry this, fright attacks against you are halved.

You may only gain each item once.

When you are done, you must return to the surface (turn to 194).

157.

You duck into the side-chamber containing the tomb of what you took to be a priest or monk, judging by his robes, but a closer look at the mystic symbols on the carving makes you realise that this is the resting place of a sorcerer.

Looking closer, you realise that you recognise the face on the carving, crude as it is. It is surely Argantbri, the ghost who warned you not to enter Calligus' tomb. Did he too die alongside the King? Another victim of Calligus?

As you stare at the water-worn stone, you hear a whisper of Argantbri's voice, as if the ghost has also worn away to nothing but a voice.

Beware the beast's left hand, what it offers is a trap. Beware the beast's right hand, for I left a trap there that will slay you. Nevertheless, both hands hold hope, but the hope of the right is more desperate than the left.

You receive **argantbri's warning** (does not consume an inventory slot).

Turn to 76.

158.

You take a closer look at the crack in the wall, and realise that it is actually more substantial than it first appeared. In fact, it's just about wide-enough for you to squeeze into.

Looking up, you make out a choked mass of fallen stone, blocking the crack above your head. This close, you can feel a faint breeze — if the crack wasn't blocked, it might act a little like a chimney.

If you want to try and unblock the crack, you must make three successful STRENGTH checks. For each check that you fail, gain one level of Exhaustion. You may subtract 5 from your roll if you have suitable digging instrument like a spade, or a **banner pole**.

You can replace a check by casting *Fissure*, *Portal*, or *Thunderclap*.

If you successfully unblock the crack, turn to 126.

To return to the chain chamber, turn to 77.

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159.

The creature you are chasing careens its way through the passages, bouncing from wall to wall, laughing all the while. Jars of ashes tumble from their niches, filling the air with the remains of the dead and the stench of evil.

If you have a ranged weapon, or spell, you may make two attacks at your foe, but you have a -6 on your ATTACK rolls. If you hit, make a note of the damage you do.

Make a DF10 REFLEXES check. If you pass the check, you stay on the creature's tail, turn to 155. If you fail, you loose track of it, turn to 218.

160.

This passage is in a very poor state. The right-hand wall has collapsed under the weight of the stone behind, so that it is now leaning against the left-hand wall at a sharp angle. To make your way along, you have to crouch, and press yourself against the wall.

The ground under your feet is strewn with the remains of broken funerary urns, making a layer of dust, ash, and shards of bone and pottery. The bones crunch unpleasantly under your feet as you pick your way forward.

Eventually the passage becomes so low that you can't make any further headway. The only options are to go back the way you came (turn to 210) or to take a narrow turn to the left (turn to 196).

161.

Acteus has no mercy for your foolish charity, but he does not slay you. Instead you are forced to watch as he uses the amber blade to free his followers from their own tombs. Renewed, they issue from the Catacomb like a plague of locusts, pausing only to slay Steno and all his men, before they begin a campaign of conquest across the land that none can stop.

Acteus keeps you alive and at his side, a tragic witness to the horror that you have unleashed. Your mind breaks, but your husk of a body is forced to continue into madness.

YOUR ADVENTURE ENDS HERE

162.

To proceed, you must have a source of light (see the introduction). When you leave this area your light source will be used up (removed from your inventory). If you use a light providing spell, it will expire at that same time. If you don't have a source of light, you must leave the passage (turn to 78) now.

The passage ahead of you is close and narrow, constructed from narrow ashlar blocks as dark as the grave you are venturing through. Carved panels, the designs upon them worn almost smooth and stained by time and water, suggest covered niches in the walls where ashes might be interred.

If you have a suitable weapon (a club, mace, or hammer), or spell (such as fissure, might, or mystic blast) you can break open a niche (turn to 89), at the risk of angering the dead still further.

It looks like the passage widens ahead (turn to 233), while the entrance (turn to 78) is behind you.

163.

You haul open one of the heavy bronze sides of the lantern and lean inside to study the strange mechanism within.

A broad bowl of what appears to be amber, but might be something like alabaster, rests atop a mechanism of bronze and copper. The mechanism bears some small resemblance to the wick raiser and reservoir of an oil lantern, but such a thing cannot have existed when this relic was placed in the tomb, and in any case, there are no clamps for a wick, nor font for oil. The arcane runes engraved into the bowl suggest that magic, not mechanism, powers this lantern.

Peering inside the bowl you find a yellowish ball of stone, which turns to dust when you touch it. It puts you in mind of a sphere of amber, but with all the colour drained from it.

If you have any **lumps of amber** you can try placing one in the bowl (turn to 152) to see what happens. If you don't then there is likely only one place left to find one — Calligus' tomb. Turn to 258.

164.

When the corpse knights have finished hacking you to death, they lay your body out on the floor of the adjacent chamber. With grinding slowness, they dress your remains in the same decaying armour you were searching, and then place your body in one of the niches from which they emerged. Your soul is now a prisoner here, and will rise to murder in the same fashion.

YOUR ADVENTURE ENDS HERE

165.

The long winding corridor widens here, opening up into an alcove on the left side, its floor level raised above that of the corridor by a small step. The two candles still flicker where you left them, their golden radiance pooling on the stone as if it were a liquid, before dripping to the floor like molten gold. This liquid light flows into a channel cut into the floor, which leads it up to, and into, the left-hand wall.

The passage leads out towards the entrance (turn to 143), and deeper into the mountain (turn to 42).

166.

The claws of the ash-wraiths sink into you, converting flesh to dust with every touch. Relentlessly, they reduce you and Cuthbert to powder. What little remains of you settles into the detritus of the ruined tomb, lost to time and darkness.

YOUR ADVENTURE ENDS HERE

167.

Gain the keyword *Wraith*

The spirit screams at you, but you can make out some words amongst the madness — ancient insults.

"Hund! Deofol! Bædling swine! Cursed be you for this torture!"

"I did not do this to you," you say. "Who did? The King?"

The tormented spirit stops screaming, though every word of its answer is a moan of pain, wrung out of its writhing and disintegrating form. "No. A fey. Crackmarrow. He it was as killed us all, an long after the Cyning placed us here to fetter him."

Your mind goes to the ruined state of the tomb. "But he escaped?"

The spirit answers your question with an affirming groan.

"What can I do?"

The ghost manages to mouth the words: "End this."

After a moment of thought, you dash the urn against the ground, shattering the old pottery into shards. Freed of the ancient spells, the ghost man tears apart, dissolving into the dust it is made from. Before it fades entirely it flings out an arm, indicating an empty niche. A parting gift.

When you check the alcove, you find a decaying leather bundle containing a **lump of amber**, a **flanged bronze key** in the shape of a skull, and a carved **antler charm** of a woman, its features worn smooth by years of touch.

While you hold the antler charm in your hand (requires a free hand), you may modify any dice roll you make by 1 in whatever is the most favourable direction.

Turn to 252.

168.

Gain the keyword *Mausoleum*

The charnel tunnels are crawling with more undead. You need to get out of here as quickly as you can. You run for the entrance before the legionaries can form up a concerted resistance, not feeling safe until you are back in the main chamber once more.

For whatever reason the soldiers do not follow you, and the tunnel remains as quiet as the grave. Turn to 54, without ticking a box.

169.

☐☐☐☐☐☐

You take some time to rest in the strange glow from the lens, which is neither warm nor cold. You have a sheepskin to lie upon, but you cannot shake the knowledge that the darkness is all around you.

If you have a **ration**, or use a spell like Abundance, Banquet, Nourish, or Stargaze to provide food, you may eat to recover 1 HP, and to remove one level of Exhaustion.

If you have an **amber potion**, you can drink it (remove it from your inventory) to remove five levels of Exhaustion.

You may choose to take a longer rest. In this case you *must* eat a **ration**, and in addition to the benefits above, you can restore your Magic Points (or reset your Psychic Fatigue), and gain an additional number of HP equal to your Rank.

When you take a longer rest, check one of the boxes above. When you have run out out of boxes to check, you have been here too long — you can still eat to regain HP and remove Exhaustion, but can no longer restore spell slots or gain enhanced healing.

When you are done you get back to your feet (turn to 54)

170.

Conoc's flaming sword strikes you down. For a brief moment your spirit starts to rise free, but then it is pulled back.

"Foolish mortal. These tombs are not so easily escaped. Your soul will remain here ... *forever*."

YOUR ADVENTURE ENDS HERE

171.

If you have the keyword *Quietus* turn to 41 now.

Cuthbert is still gazing uneasily towards the glimmering blue glow at the far side of the chamber when you join him, his scrawled notes temporarily set aside.

"It seems that every time you achieve some goal in these tombs, things change," he says.

"I'm not even sure what I am achieving, if that is what you call it, other than to draw us deeper into this realm of the dead."

You gaze up at the ominous lens, still hanging above your heads like the sword of Damocles. Its pale radiance glittering off the particles of dust that thicken the air.

"I fear that something terrible is drawing near," Cuthbert says.

You have no reply, so you step away (turn to 201).

172.

Climbing the rope is an exhausting and hair-raising process, going hand over hand up through the vast darkness of the shaft. You take advantage of the second rope set up for Cuthbert, knotting it around yourself so that at least you won't fall, but it still saps your vitality.

You gain one level of Exhaustion. For each level of Exhaustion, you have -1 when rolling *any* attribute check. Exhaustion can be regained with rest.

Eventually, you reach the top (turn to 209).

173.

The faceless cadavers, set here in an uncountable years ago by the First King to stop foolish adventurers just such as you from disturbing the evil of Calligus, cut you down. There is no hatred in this act, just as there is no mercy, only death.

YOUR ADVENTURE ENDS HERE

174.

As you return to the echoing central shaft of the catacombs, you are struck by the sensation that something has changed, but you cannot immediately tell what. As you scan the gloom, you catch a strange blue glimmer from the corner of your eye.

When you focus on the light, on the far side of the chamber, you think for a moment that you see a figure, creeping amongst the fallen stones. Chilled, you call out to Cuthbert.

"Master Cuthbert, what do you see over by those rocks?"

Cuthbert draws close to you. "A strange glimmering light, that I like not at all."

You can only agree. Turn to 57.

175.

"Flavius, I have something to reveal to you, and I fear you will not like it."

The skeletal centurion shifts uncomfortably in his chair, his jawbone working as if expressing some sort of emotion that you cannot fairly read. It sends chills down your own spine, but you press on.

"Here is the truth. No one waits for you above. It must have been centuries since you came down here. You, and your men are dead, or should I say *undead*, walking skeletons in fact."

After a moment, Flavius bursts into laughter. "Oh, that is a fine jest. It's true we have been too long amongst the dead, but there's still life in these Selentine hearts yet!"

If you want to persist in trying to persuade him, turn to 73. Otherwise return to 19 and pick another option.

176.

Only one passage appears to be accessible, but there are clearly others, sealed behind huge circular capstones set into the walls of the shaft. Old crumbling mortar holds them in place, but you feel the uncomfortable tingle of sorcery when you rest your hands on them, so there is magic too.

The face of the stones are incised with runes and symbols. Some are Kellish, some far more obscure. Tracing the old marks with your fingertips you see one sign repeated over and again, the single open eye, as you saw on the lens as you descended.

Cuthbert joins you in your investigations.

"Do each of these stones mark the prison of some evil?" he asks. "If it be so, then what vile remains must be entombed in this place. This symbol," he indicates one of the eyes, "appears to be some form of ward or protection."

He opens Bishop Aldwin's book and leafs through the pages. "Aldwin says that he tried both force and prayer to open these, and it availed him nothing." Cuthbert tugs at his earlobe thoughtfully. "Reading between the lines, I think he may have attempted sorcery too, with no better result. We will have to confine our explorations to the one that lies open."

Turn to 44.

177.

You approach the entrance to the ground level passage, a yawning darkness that stretches away into the stone. No capstone covers this tunnel, but the Kellish rune for the letter **Y** is marked above it.

> If you have the keyword *Inter* you have already delved into this passage.

If you wish to enter the passage turn to 262.

Behind you, Cuthbert hums to himself as he works in the middle of the chamber (turn to 54).

178.

You have to scramble up a mound of rubble to reach the entrance to this passage. The sound of dripping water, the first you have encountered in this dry tomb, echoes from within. The capstone appears to have tumbled down the mound when it opened, and now lies below you. The Kellish rune for the letter **W** is marked above the entrance.

> If you have the keyword *Pyramid* you have already delved into this passage.

If you wish to enter the passage turn to 27.

Behind you, Cuthbert tends the fire in the middle of the chamber (turn to 54).

179.

The huge lantern is lit, its many panes pulsing with an amber glow that rises and dims like a heartbeat.

The lantern is suspended from a series of bronze chains which loop back down from their unseen attachment points far above to a complex arrangement of verdigris-stained wheels and pulley blocks, like rope-work rendered in metal.

Tentatively pulling on the chains, you realise that the lamp is balanced by some sort of counterweight. By hauling on various chains you can raise or lower the lantern, and move it in position relative to the great lens.

You can change the lantern's position to one of four states:

- **Resting on the floor** (the lantern starts here)
- **Illuminating the amber block** in the centre of the chamber
- **Illuminating the amber pane** that is set into the wall
- **Illuminating the tomb entrance**

Each time you want to move the lantern, make a DF14 STRENGTH check. If you fail the check you still move the lantern, but gain one level of Exhaustion in the process.

> The first time you move the lantern, turn to 122

When you are done you can return to your camp (turn to 258).

180.

The light of the lantern, focused through the great lens, falls in a beam upon the amber panel. At its touch the hard stone melts, as if it had never existed, leaving behind an empty doorway and a faint bar of yellow radiance where the panel once was.

"Sorcery!" exclaims Cuthbert, examining the passage that has been revealed behind the panel. It is a narrow cleft in the rock that appears to lead to a rising stair.

If you are lucky, and the ghost spoke true, then this may be the means to escape from the Catacombs. If you wish to gather Cuthbert and make your escape, turn to 251, otherwise you can return to the main chamber (turn to 258).

181.

The decrepit passage winds its way to what appears to be a dead end. Rubble blocks the way ahead, and the masonry walls are fractured with cracks and gaps.

If you have the keyword *Ashes* then your only route is to turn back the way you came (turn to 196), otherwise gain the keyword *Ashes* and read on.

You hear the faint scrape of feet on stone behind you, and whirl around in time to catch a glimpse of a shadowy figure further up the passage. It's short, gnarled, misshapen, with a suggestion of claws and horns — the only detail you can make out clearly is its glowing eyes.

The creature lets out a nasty snigger, and then reaches up and yanks on the loose ceiling blocks! Stone and rubble tumble down, threatening to crush or trap you.

Avoid a SPEED of 12 (roll less than 12 - your EVASION on 2d10) to throw yourself up the passage before it falls in. If you fail you take 3d6 damage (reduced by your AF). If this reduces you to zero health turn to 69, otherwise you see the creature slip into one of the cracks in the wall.

To give chase turn to 34. Otherwise you can limp back up the passage again (turn to 196).

182.

Cuthbert hurries over with his pack clutched to his chest, notes and fragments gathered from the tomb entrances overflowing from his pockets.

You quickly gather your own belongings (you may visit 97 and recover any items you wish, while following your normal inventory limits, then return here).

Inside the passage the ghost has revealed, you find a stair that spirals and winds its way up through the earth for what seems like an endless distance, far further than the route you took to enter. As you climb and climb Cuthbert chatters constantly, excited at the prospect of freedom.

At last the passage breaks the surface, and you emerge onto a windswept hillside. The first rays of dawn fall golden on the sighing leaves of a small wood in the valley below.

"Be praised," Cuthbert mutters.

You clamber up onto an exposed rock to take stock, wherever this is, it is not where you entered, and by the time you return to Cuthbert even the entrance to the stairs has vanished. There seems to be no choice but to head into the valley and look for habitation.

Turn to 279.

183.

It seems Calligus has no more use for you. The demon squeezes until your bones break, and the warm blood sprays from your crushed limbs, adding fresh gore to the old stains that mar its oily flesh. Only when all life has been erased, does the demon drag your corpse to its fangy maw and gobble you up.

YOUR ADVENTURE ENDS HERE

184.

You reach a junction where a side passage juts off the main tunnel, which gently curves away in both directions. A semi-circular archway is decorated with further frescoes, which seem to depict some sort of robed figure seated on a throne — you suspect it may be a representation of Death himself.

The main passage heads left towards the entrance (turn to 234) and right (turn to 115), while the arch appears to open onto a small chamber (turn to 151).

185.

You produce the **black mirror** and hand it to Flavius (remove it from your inventory), bidding him to look at himself in it. The effect is immediate. Though his skeletal face cannot show emotion, his bony hands begin to tremble where they hold the stone.

Slowly, one hand rises to his face, the bony fingertips tapping against his skull. If a skeleton can show a look of horror, Flavius' does so!

"It's true," he gasps. "We are dead!"

Turn to 229.

186.

If you have the keyword *Pyramid* the sentries know not to trust you. Turn to 202 now.

Some sixth sense tells you that a glimmer of intellect still clings to these dread creatures. Rather than fight them, you raise your hands, and say, "Take me to your leader" in what you hope is passable Bacchile.

Your gut feeling appears to be rewarded. Instead of attacking, the legionaries put up their swords and gesture for you to follow them deeper into the passages.

You thread your way through narrow chambers where broken sarcophagi and heaps of shattered bones speak of ancient violence, or undead hunger. You pass further cadaverous legionaries, but you are not molested as long as you travel with your ossified bodyguards.

Eventually you reach a chamber deep in the rock where it appears that the centurion, a dead man in more ornate armour, has made his lair.

Turn to 29.

187.

This chamber resembles the charnel-house gleanings of a battlefield. It is stuffed with the broken and twisted remains of armour and weapons, heaped casually against the rough stone walls, like so much flotsam.

There doesn't appear to be a single intact piece of gear. Everything has been staved in, crushed, or snapped. The style of what remains is baroque and devilish. The broken helmets are surmounted by horns, the gauntlets with claws, the vambraces with demon faces. You are chilled by the thought of what manner of creatures might have worn them.

You can search through the pile (turn to 9), or leave the room (turn to 30).

188.

You whip out the length of **broken chain** that you found in the stone chest and slash at the spectre with it. At once the chain seems to grow, gaining two dozen links in an eye-blink, and wraps itself around the creature, binding its indistinct arms against its sides. (Remove the chain from your inventory).

The spectre still claws at you, but it is severely hampered.

> ***Spectre*** *(rank 8) — Att 8, Touch (d6,5) Def 6 MD 11 Eva 0 Ref 6 Ste 18 Per 13 AF 0 HP 16*
>
> *Non-magical weapons and physical spells only inflict half damage.*

If the spectre still defeats you turn to 219, otherwise turn to 143.

189.

You attempt to place the three stones, but they won't seem to click into place. You guess that the order must be wrong.

Gasping, you splash back to the surface, where you drag yourself, dripping and frustrated, back to the entrance to the chamber. Behind you, the tomb is silent and enigmatic, its secret — if it has one — still unrevealed.

You can dive down to have another attempt (turn to 239), head back up the passage (turn to 273), or give up entirely (turn to 131).

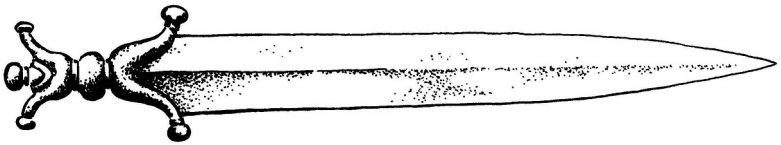
190.

You enter a claustrophobically small chamber, stacked hip-deep with bones. Femurs, fibula, tibia and humerus, set in layers like some sort of macabre library shelf with scapulas for books.

You enter carefully, but your footsteps disturb the precarious piles, causing bones to fall to the floor in showers of dust. Test your EVASION against a SPEED of 7. If you fail, you have inhaled some of the bone dust and gain one level of Exhaustion.

> For each level of Exhaustion, you have -1 when rolling *any* attribute check. Exhaustion can be regained with rest.

There doesn't seem to be anything else to find here, other than the arch leading out (turn to 259).



191.

> Gain the keyword *Necropolis*

You prove to be a match for the ancient legionaries, and defeat them both. Their disarticulated bones and armour pieces collapse to the ground with a clatter that echoes down the tunnels.

As the bones fall apart, you spy a **silver amulet** that must have been lodged inside one of the creatures. Taking it up, you see that it is engraved with sorcerous runes.

> The amulet functions as the Abaraxus Stone (DW rulebook, p142). Each time you gain HP while resting, you recover one additional HP.

You can now return to the entrance (turn to 78) or proceed down the passage (turn to 109).

192.

You venture under the low arch into a roughly constructed chamber, low-roofed and cold. A bronze chain as thick as your thigh enters the chamber above your head, through a stone-edged hole, and is then fastened to the floor by a massive hasp.

If you have the keyword *Tumulus* you have already released the chain here, and nothing remains other than to choose one of the exits. Towards the main passage (turn to 62), into Calligus' tomb (turn to 81), or down a narrow passage leading deeper (turn to 236).

Two more of the First King's guardian soldiers stand sentry over the bronze chain and its fastening. If you are currently wearing a suit of **antique armour**, or carry **ceawlin's amulet** the dead knights take you as one of their own and ignore you. If not, they immediately move to attack you. Unlike your first encounter, there is room enough in this chamber for both to attack you at once.

> ***Tomb Guardians*** *(rank 5) — Att 16, Sword (d10,6) Def 10 MD 5 Eva 5 Ref 8 Ste 13 Per 7 AF 4 HP 15*
>
> *If one of the Guardians is not attacked for two rounds, it will cast a lesser healing spell on itself on the second round, restoring 5HP.*

You can flee after the first round to 62, but you will take a parting blow of 5HP if you do. If the guardians defeat you turn to 173.

If you win the fight, or if the guardians are ignoring you, you may release the hasp holding the chain. If you do so, gain the keyword *Tumulus* and turn to 81, ticking a box.

193.

The construction of this lock is of the most ancient design, more a concealed hasp and pin than a modern lock, so even a Knight can attempt to open it. To pick the lock you must roll equal to or less than your REFLEXES on 3d10. If you are Assassin you add 5 to your REFLEXES for every rank in the *Pick Lock* skill. You can do the same if you have a set of lockpicks, or a **giant barbel**.

If you succeed in opening the lock turn to 277, otherwise you must return to 234.

194.

The long passage opens out into a large chamber, dominated by an ornate tomb, carved from the living rock. Four columns support a domed canopy that shades a square base and a carved figure lying in state.

Where you might expect an inscription to reveal the name of whoever is entombed here, there is a curious panel, triangular, with three indentations, as if something is meant to be placed there — it's hard to be sure, however, because the whole base of the tomb, and most of the rest of the chamber, are deep under water. Even the carved figure has been worn away to obscurity.

The main passage winds away towards the entrance (turn to 273).

If you have any **triangular keystones**, you realise at once that they would fit the indentations on the tomb. If you want to dive down and try to place them, turn to 239.

195.

The beetles pull you to the ground, and then drag your body over to the swarming pile, where your flesh and bones becomes food for their multitude of ghastly young.

YOUR ADVENTURE ENDS HERE

196.

If you have the keyword *Vault* turn to 75, otherwise gain the keyword *Vault* now.

The passage here is narrow, and in disrepair. Corroded bronze rings set into the walls — now little more than lumps of greenish metal — show where chains were once fixed, but whatever they held must be free now.

A sudden click is your only warning, before ancient spears spring out of the wall! Avoid a SPEED of 12 (roll less than 12 - your EVASION on 2d10) to get out of the way. If you fail you take 1d8 damage. If this reduces you to zero health turn to 245, otherwise you catch sight of narrow glowing eyes in the gloom as something dashes away down a side passage.

To give chase turn to 159. Otherwise you can venture deeper (turn to 181), or retreat (turn to 53).

197.

A low passage winds into the rock, curving from side to side in no evident pattern. The small stones stuffed into the gaps between the wall slabs have tumbled down in many places, leaving piles of rubble strewn across the slab floor. Nothing has disturbed this place in centuries — clearly Aldwin never came so deep.

> If you have the keyword *Grave* turn to 143 now, otherwise read on.

As you round yet another turn, you see ahead of you — at the limit of your light — what appears to be an upright sarcophagus, decorated with a carved suit of armour, riven vertically down the middle, so that half of the body, and half of the lid, lean against each wall of the passage.

As your light falls on the broken stone, a black mist rises from it — as if the light was burning the rock. The mist congeals into the shape of a man, who rushes towards you, arms raised!

You have a moment to react before the spectre reaches you. If you have one of the following items you may attempt to use it:

- A **broken chain**, turn to 188
- A **bronze mirror**, turn to 43
- A **banner pole**, turn to 52

Otherwise, you must fight the creature (turn to 254)

198.

As you approach the altar, the vertical slab splits and opens, revealing that it is something like a reredos or triptych of stone. The golden glow from the stone candles licks across the blank stone, forming words.

"If you intend mercy for the dead, light a candle for our memories."

> If you have the keyword *Inter* there is already a candle on the altar, and nothing more for you to do here. Turn to 54.

Looking closely at the altar in front of the reredos, you can see a simple indentation into which a **candle** could be placed. If you want to place a candle here turn to 247, otherwise you can head out of the room (turn to 30).

199.

You place three **lumps of amber** into the broad dish of the lantern (remove them from your inventory), and step back. Again, the lumps flicker with a pale gold fire, but this time the flare does not die down. Instead, it builds, spreading to the whole lamp mechanism, till it blazes with light!

Gain the keyword *Lychgate*

You close the door of the lantern, shielding your eyes against the light — which dispels the gloom of the tomb depths and makes the amber block in the centre of the shaft gleam with answering fire. With the lantern lit, you realise that the great lens has also descended — indeed it appears to be connected in some way to the same bunch of hanging chains as the lantern itself.

Tracing these chains, you discover a mechanism of bronze wheels and blocks that puts you in mind of a ship's rigging. It looks like it might be possible to raise the lamp using these chains, though moving it may move the lens as well.

Turn to 179

200.

If you have the keyword *Ossuary* turn to 70 now, otherwise read on.

As you approach the archway there is a clank of metal and bones, and two skeletal legionaries in the antique tarnished armour of Selentine step forward from the shadows, swords raised.

One of them calls out in archaic Bacchile: "Centurion Flavius! An intruder has fought past our sentries! Kill him, for the Emperor!"

If you wish to try and placate these undead soldiers by claiming that you did not mean to cause harm, roll equal to or under your LOOKS on 1d20, adding your Rank to your LOOKS if you are a Knave. If you succeed, the centurion listens to you and waves you into the chamber, turn to 29.

If you don't want to try, or you try and fail, you must fight, but you take advantage of their moment of hesitation to charge through the archway and attack the leader, turn to 220.

201.

You are in the central chamber of the catacombs, albeit at a lower level than before. A rising spiral path winds around the inside of the vast shaft but much of it is broken, so that it only gives access to a few entrances close to ground level. Overhead, the vast stained-glass lens gathers sunlight you cannot even see, and casts it down as a shifting medley of light.

In the centre of the chamber, Master Cuthbert works at your makeshift camp, arranging significant fragments of marked stone into patterns.

From here you may:

- Speak with Cuthbert (turn to 45)
- Take a moment to rest (turn to 169)
- Store or retrieve items from your belongings (turn to 97)

You may also venture into one of the open tunnels leading out of the shaft. Six of these are open, including the alcove containing the enormous lantern, while others are covered by massive circular stone slabs, as yet unopened.

- One at ground level (turn to 177)
- One accessible by a mound of rubble (turn to 178)
- One that opens onto the spiral ramp (turn to 78)
- One with a light glowing within (turn to 213)
- One whose slab is only half open (turn to 144)
- The lantern chamber (turn to 24)

If you have the keyword *Lychgate*, then a golden glow is issuing from the lantern chamber.

If you have a **copper tray** turn to 74 to examine it.

202.

You must fight both legionaries at once (remember to split your defence between them).

> ***Skeletal Legionaries*** *(rank 1) — Att 11, Sword (d8,4) Def 5 MD 1 Eva 3 Ref 6 Ste 13 Per 7 AF 3 (5 vs. stabbing) HP 15*

If you defeat the skeletons turn to 106, otherwise turn to 215.

203.

There is little rest to be had in the depths of the Catacombs, but you try your best.

If you have a **ration**, or use a spell like Abundance, Banquet, Nourish, or Stargaze to provide food, you may eat to recover 1 HP, and to remove one level of Exhaustion. If the sulphur fumes have not been dispelled, then you cannot remove your last level of Exhaustion.

If you have an **amber potion**, you can drink it (remove it from your inventory) to remove five levels of Exhaustion.

When you are done you get back to your feet (turn to 258)

204.

You are impaled on one of the giant fish's needle-sharp barbels, and then swallowed whole. You are digested for weeks, providing enough food for the torpid creature to endure for years — your soul is imprisoned far longer.

YOUR ADVENTURE ENDS HERE

205.

You help yourself to some of the **candles** from the corpses (you gain 3 candles), but they do not take it kindly. No sooner have you pocketed the ancient tapers, than three of the armoured figures heave themselves from their alcoves and attack you with their ancient blades.

You must fight all three corpse knights at once (remember to split your DEFENCE between them).

> ***Corpse Knight*** *(rank 1) — Att 11, Ancient Sword (d6,3) Def 5 MD 3 Eva 3 Ref 5 Ste 13 Per 7 AF 4 HP 4*

If you survive, you can return to the passage (turn to 261), otherwise the undead hack you mercilessly to pieces, and inter your remains beside their own.

YOUR ADVENTURE ENDS HERE

206.

You edge towards the demon's open hand, which rests loosely curled on the floor, blood smeared and gross. You can just see something resting on the creature's palm, a red lump the size of a heart, no! It *is* a heart!

Calligus shifts restlessly as you step between the pylons, as if sensing your interest. Any closer and the beast will surely know that you are set on the prize it grasps. If it were to grasp the chained fist tight it might crush the heart to gore.

Your only chance is a sudden strike, and the hope that, chained on its back, the demon will not see you coming until it is too late. If you wish to try and grab the heart turn to 240. If you'd rather draw back for now turn to 81.

207.

Gain the keyword *Exhume*.

Carefully, you light the candles placed on the helmet of one of the reclining bodies. At once, a soft glow spreads through the shell of corroded armour, as if the corpse within was aflame. The light seeps out through the armour's many holes, dripping like honey down the rough stone wall.

You jump back in alarm, but the light does not reach you, instead it gathers into one of a pair of small channels cut into the floor and runs ahead up the hallway deeper into the mountain.

From here you can follow the light (turn to 30), or return to the junction (turn to 262)

208.

The massive statue falls on you with its full weight, crushing you into the ground and smashing your bones. You try fruitlessly to remove it, but it's impossible.

As you struggle, a black shape creeps towards you. You catch a glimpse of thorny limbs and malevolent blue eyes before death claims you.

YOUR ADVENTURE ENDS HERE

209.

☐☐☐☐

Tick one of the boxes above only if instructed in the previous passage. If you have just ticked the last box, turn to 235 now. If all the boxes are already ticked, turn to 96.

You have returned to the windswept mountain slopes at the top of the entrance to the Catacombs. Pyran has set up your camp a little way downslope, where an outcrop of grey rocks and a single scraggly tree provides a few scraps of shelter. Here he has busied himself setting up tents, stores of supplies, and a meagre stock of firewood, while keeping company with your pack horses.

While in your camp you can help yourself to one or more **rations** from the stocks, as well as **torches**, though you can only take two of these items at a time back down the shaft.

You can also choose to rest (turn to 271) here (this will progress the checkboxes above), or descend back into the catacombs (turn to 44).

210.

You enter a chamber with the remains of a pillar of amber in the middle, which must have dominated the room when it was intact. Something has shattered the pillar from *within*, scattering broken shards of it across the floor. When you examine the remains of the pillar you can see traces of a hollow space where something was contained. Something that is now loose.

A trio of sagging archways lead further into the rock, left (turn to 12), right (turn to 160), and centre (turn to 53), while the half-blocked entrance is behind you (turn to 104).

211.

You attempt to place the three stones, but they won't seem to click into place. You guess that the order must be wrong.

Gasping, you splash back to the surface, where you drag yourself, dripping and frustrated, back to the entrance to the chamber. Behind you, the tomb is silent and enigmatic, its secret — if it has one — still unrevealed.

You can dive down to have another attempt (turn to 239), head back up the passage (turn to 273), or give up entirely (turn to 131).

212.

You attack the surprised skeletal cook, who grabs his cleaver to defend himself.

> ***Skeleton*** *(rank 1) — Att 11, Cleaver (d4+1,4) Def 5 MD 3 Eva 3 Ref 5 Ste 13 Per 7 AF 0 (2 vs. stabbing) HP 4*
>
> *The cook keeps the workbench between you, both combatants have +2 DEF*

If you win, you may help yourself to the **cleaver**, the **copper tray**, and a **grotesque meal**, and then make your exit to 111. Otherwise turn to 242.

213.

You approach the entrance to a passage, taller and wider than the ones you have ventured into before. A broken capstone, seven feet across, lies at an angle nearby, while the Kellish rune for the letter **O** is marked above the entrance.

The passage beyond flickers with a restless orange glow, like firelight.

> If you have the keyword *Kokh* you have already delved into this passage.

If you wish to enter the passage turn to 140.

Behind you, Cuthbert tends the fire in the middle of the chamber (turn to 54).

214.

An arch of sagging ashlar opens from the damaged corridor (turn to 134) into a deep alcove. Banner poles of ancient bronze are heaped at the back, each crowned with a cast boar's head, mouth open in rage. Faintly tinted dust suggests that banners were once hung from the poles, but they have decayed long ago. You can take a **banner pole** if you wish.

Examining the back of the alcove, you see some odd lines in the stone that might mark a concealed entrance. If you wish to try to break it open, roll 1d20 under your STRENGTH. You may try as many times as you wish, but lose 1HP for each attempt. If you succeed, turn to 120.

215.

You are hacked down by the tarnished blades of the long-dead legionaries, which rise and fall with remorseless intensity. Worse, after you are dead, they tear your flesh apart to pry out the bones, cracking them for the sweet marrow within, which they devour with much gnashing of their skeletal jaws.

YOUR ADVENTURE ENDS HERE

216.

You approach the statue cautiously, raising your light to examine the glossy black stone. The dust of ages has gathered in the hollows of its eye sockets, but it looks as if something is concealed in the dirt. Reaching in, you remove a **lump of amber** about the size of an egg. You aren't sure what to make of it, but you may take it if you wish.

Examining the rest of the statue you note that the back of the skull overhangs the plinth it rests on by a significant amount, creating a kind of niche underneath.

Examination complete, you return to the room (turn to 259).

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217.

On the other side of the wall is a small chamber lit by a flickering dish of oil. Crackmarrow is waiting by the wall. Close up, you see a wizened gnome-like figure, with gnarled skin like old oak, and a head crowned by antlers, between which is lodged a fist-sized lump of amber. Its limbs are like spindle-sticks, fragile as old tinder-wood, drained by centuries of imprisonment. It should be an easy fight, but no sooner have you entered than the chamber echoes to another *crack*, and the faerie transforms into the shape of an ogre and swings at you with its fists!

> ***Crackmarrow*** *(rank 7) — Att 20, Fists (d8,5) Def 12 MD 8 Eva 4 Ref 5 Ste 12 Per 13 AF 1 HP 25*
>
> *If you were forced to enter the chamber by crawling, you are surprised.*

If you defeat the malevolent sprite, it resumes its original form, and the **lump of amber** rolls free. While you carry this particular lump, you will regenerate 1HP at the end of every third section you visit, as long as you remain in the Catacombs.

It appears that isn't Crackmarrow's only treasure. Like many goblins, he appeared to covet gold, and the tiny chamber contains a sizeable mound of treasure stolen from the graves of others. Counted out, this amounts to **300 florins**, which you can take as you wish.

You squeeze your way out of the chamber and head back towards the main shaft. As you make your way through the dilapidated passages, you realise that some change has come over them. The dust no longer hangs in the air, and the brooding sense of oppression seems lighter.

Gain the keyword *Tomb*, and turn to 54, ticking a box.

218.

You cast around the crumbling passages, looking for some trace of the creature, but all the routes look alike. You are just about to choose one passage when you hear a voice whispering unctuously in your ear.

Not that way.

You jump, looking around, but there is no sign of the speaker. But you are sure that you have heard this voice before. Uncertain, but lacking any better plan, you follow its advice and choose another opening (turn to 181)

219.

You fall to your knees, defeated. The spectre surges forward, sinking its spectral arms *into* your body. A terrible cold overtakes you, and then the spectre consumes you, body and soul, leaving nothing but dust behind.

YOUR ADVENTURE ENDS HERE

220.

Gain the keywords *Necropolis* and *Mausoleum*. If you have the keyword *Ossuary*, remove it.

You draw your weapons and leap to attack Flavius, who has barely time to gasp a Selentine oath before battle is joined. You must fight him.

> ***Flavius*** *(rank 2) — Att 12, Sword (d8+1,4) Def 7 MD 1 Eva 4 Ref 6 Ste 13 Per 7 AF 4 (6 vs. stabbing) HP 19*

On the first round of combat, Flavius has the table between you and him, and gains +1 Armour Factor.

On the second round of combat, Flavius is reinforced by a further two legionaries, who rush in from outside, and you must fight all three together (remember to split your defence between them).

> ***Skeletal Legionaries*** *(rank 1) — Att 11, Sword (d8,4) Def 5 MD 1 Eva 3 Ref 7 Ste 13 Per 7 AF 3 (5 vs. stabbing) HP 15*

On the fourth round, another two legionaries, this time armed with shields, also join the combat, and you must fight all the legionaries at once (remember to split your defence between them).

> ***Skeletal Legionaries*** *(rank 1) — Att 11, Sword (d8,4) Def 5 MD 1 Eva 3 Ref 10 Ste 13 Per 7 AF 3 (5 vs. stabbing) HP 15 (shield)*

If you lose the fight turn to 215. If you win turn to 39.

221.

Flavius wastes no time in gathering his men — there are at least two dozen wasted legionaries still hiding in the passages — and setting them to follow you. They produce a tattered banner from some corner of the tomb, and march out into the pale light of the shaft carrying it before them.

If the ghost of Argantbri is surprised to see an undead legion at your back, he does not say so. Cuthbert is not so sanguine! He shrieks, and takes cover behind the rubble, and it is all you can do to persuade him to join you. Even when he does, his pack clutched to his chest, he mutters prayers constantly beneath his breath.

You quickly gather your own belongings (you may visit 97 and recover any items you wish, while following your normal inventory limits, then return here).

Argantbri raises his arms as you approach. "So, you have chosen to take the narrow way to safety. This is wise. The living do not belong in this palace of dust, and the dead cannot escape it."

He makes a mystical gesture, and one of the heavy stone coverings rolls aside to reveal a narrow passage.

"This is your way to safety, take it, and do not return."

Inside the passage you find a stair that spirals and winds its way up through the earth for what seems like an endless distance, far further than the route you took to enter. As you climb and climb the legionaries chatter behind you in the darkness, excited at the prospect of freedom.

At last the passage breaks the surface, and you emerge onto a windswept hillside. The first rays of dawn fall golden on the sighing leaves of a small wood in the valley below.

"God be praised," Cuthbert mutters.

"At last, freedom!" Flavius declares, to the acclaim of his men, but their joy is only momentary. No sooner have they set foot upon the surface, than the ancient magic holding their bones together is extinguished. Their skeletal forms disintegrate, along with their corroded armour. Flavius has only one moment to swear to his gods, and to press the banner-less standard into your hands, before he too is gone.

As long as you carry **flavius' standard**, which is a two-handed item, you gain the legionaries protection. Treat the standard as a magical spear (2d4+2, 6), which also intercepts blows as if you bore a shield. While using the standard as a weapon you can fight on till -3 HP (at which point you perish as normal). Once per day, the standard will heal you for 7HP.

Turn to 279.

222.

You are standing, considering the various exists, when something disturbs the water around you. You barely have time to react before an enormous bone-white fish breaks the surface, its sharp barbels stabbing the air like spears.

> ***Blind Fish*** *(rank 4) — Att 17, Bite (d8,4) Def 4 MD 4 Eva 4 Ref 5 Ste 14 Per 5 AF 1 HP 20*
>
> *If you have previously cast Clairvoyance or Warning, you are not taken by surprise, otherwise you are surprised, and must skip your first round.*
> *The fish is blind. Instead of attacking, you may make a STEALTH check. If you succeed, the fish will not know where you are. You may either choose to escape (turn to 257), or attack with surprise on the following round.*

You can choose to escape by turning to 257. If the fish kills you, turn to 204.

Otherwise, gain the keyword *Revenant*. You can help yourself to a **giant barbel** if you wish, and can carve off enough fish-flesh to serve as two **rations**. When you are done you can choose one of the passages leading out of the chamber: towards the entrance (turn to 150), left (turn to 147), right (turn to 114), or deeper (turn to 273).

223.

You reach a junction where a side passage juts off the main tunnel, which gently curves away in both directions. A semi-circular archway is decorated with further frescoes, though after a glance you don't care to look more closely. You spot a small **lump of amber** on the ground, which you can take if you wish.

The main passage heads left towards the entrance (turn to 46) and right (turn to 249), while the arch appears to open onto a small chamber (turn to 94), from which you can hear a rustling noise.

224.

The spirit does not *mean* to kill you, but that doesn't stop it ripping you apart with its spectral claws. The poor creature soon suffers the same fate, torn apart by time and pain.

YOUR ADVENTURE ENDS HERE

225.

If you have the keyword *Wraith*, there is nothing more to see here: turn to 252, otherwise, read on.

You lift one of the urns out of its niche, hefting the weight of it. As you do, the top slides off, and a cloud of dust spills into the air.

The dust congeals into a spectral head and torso, the limbs etiolated and torn. The face wails as it appears, a malice-filled scream that threatens to tear the spirit apart.

The tattered limbs reach for you with claw-like fingers. You have time to slam the lid back on the urn (turn to 252), drop the urn and fight (turn to 137), or try to talk to the ghost (turn to 167).

226.

You bend to examine the massive hasp that binds the chain to the floor.

At once, the room darkens. Violet circles appear in the air, concentrically surrounding you. Between each circle, a string of runes twists in the thickening vapour. A ward of magical power protects this hasp, and you have triggered it.

The ward has three circles, each containing a magical effect. The first circle will cast *Disease* upon you, the second *Fossilize*, and the third *Dishearten*, each with a MAGICAL ATTACK of 20.

There is just enough time between the activation of each circle for you to cast defensive spells, such as *Spell Wall*, *Spell Screen*, *Protection*, or *Invulnerability*. It is also possible to defeat each individual ring with a *Dispel Magic* or *Terminate Enchantment* of 7MP.

The spells above are described on pages 82-84 of the Dragon Warriors rulebook. Each takes effect only if its MAGICAL ATTACK overcomes your MAGICAL DEFENCE.

- *Disease* causes you to lose 2HP each time you move to a new section.
- *Fossilize* turns you to stone.
- *Dishearten* causes your heart to explode, and inflicts 1D4 damage even if it does not.

If you are carrying **ceawlin's amulet** the ward is deactivated, and you do not suffer the magical attacks. If you are carrying the **first king's crown**, these magical attacks have -5 strength. The same is true if you have **wassa's blessing** or **argantbri's warning**. These effects stack.

If you manage to survive all three attacks, then the hasp is easy enough to open afterwards, sending the bronze chain flying free. Gain the keyword *Burial*, and turn to 81, ticking a box.

227.

You try the key in the keyhole set into the wall, but it doesn't even fit. Whatever this lock was made for, if it *is* a lock, it was for something of a very different shape.

You can try to pick the lock (turn to 193), or return to 234.

228.

You place three **lumps of amber** into the broad dish of the lantern (remove them from your inventory), and step back. Again, the lumps flicker with a pale gold fire, but this time the flare does not die down. Instead, it builds, spreading to the whole lamp mechanism, till it blazes with light!

Gain the keyword *Lychgate*

You close the door of the lantern, shielding your eyes against the light — which seems blinding in the gloom of the catacombs — but you still can't see a way to move the thing; it remains chained to the ceiling of the chamber. Shaking your head you return to the main chamber (turn to 54).

229.

Gain the keyword *Mausoleum*

The realisation that he is one of the undead appears to release the magical hold that the Catacombs has over the centurion. As he staggers to his feet, his bones begin to disarticulate, and his tarnished armour dissolves with corrosion. He has just enough to point at a small box in the corner and gasp, "For you ..." before he, and everything he holds, collapse into dust.

Judging by the sounds you can hear from the tunnels, the other legionaries suffer the same fate — the release of death.

After a moment, you move to examine the small box Flavius indicated. It contains **300 florins** in ancient Selentine silver, a **jewelled aquila**, two decrepit beeswax **candles**, and a **healing potion** (heals 7HP, or 3HP if you drink half).

Treasure taken, you decide there is nothing more here but the remains of brave men brought low. Turn to 54, and tick a box.

230.

The floor heaves in the flare of your light, hundreds of glittering insects flee for the safety of cracks and crevices.

In the narrow space they leave behind you see a trio of unlikely objects: a **flanged bronze key** in the shape of a skull, a **lump of amber** and what appears to be a corroded selentine **gladius** (d8,3) of great age.

Once you are done, turn to 67

231.

You are in the entranceway of Calligus' tomb, near the arch where the armoured guardians attacked you. The guardians are dead, and their remains have turned to rust and bones. You can help yourself to a **broken femur** if you wish. You can also dress yourself in the undead creature's **antique armour**, full-face helm and all. You will gain an AF of 4, but the armour has been touched by death. While you wear it, your REFLEXES and EVASION are each lowered by 2.

The passage leads out of the tomb (turn to 91), and towards the demon's chamber (turn to 62).

232.

Make a DC14 STRENGTH check. If you fail, you don't manage to get the lid off the coffin this time. Return to 114 and pick an option. Otherwise, read on.

You heave the lid off the closed coffin. The slab crashes to the ground, filling the air with even more dust. The remains within have become yet more dust, only a few fragile bones marking the man who once lay inside. Within the ribcage (if you have not already taken it) is a **triangular keystone** — a sandstone block about the size of your palm with a cryptic design marked on it.

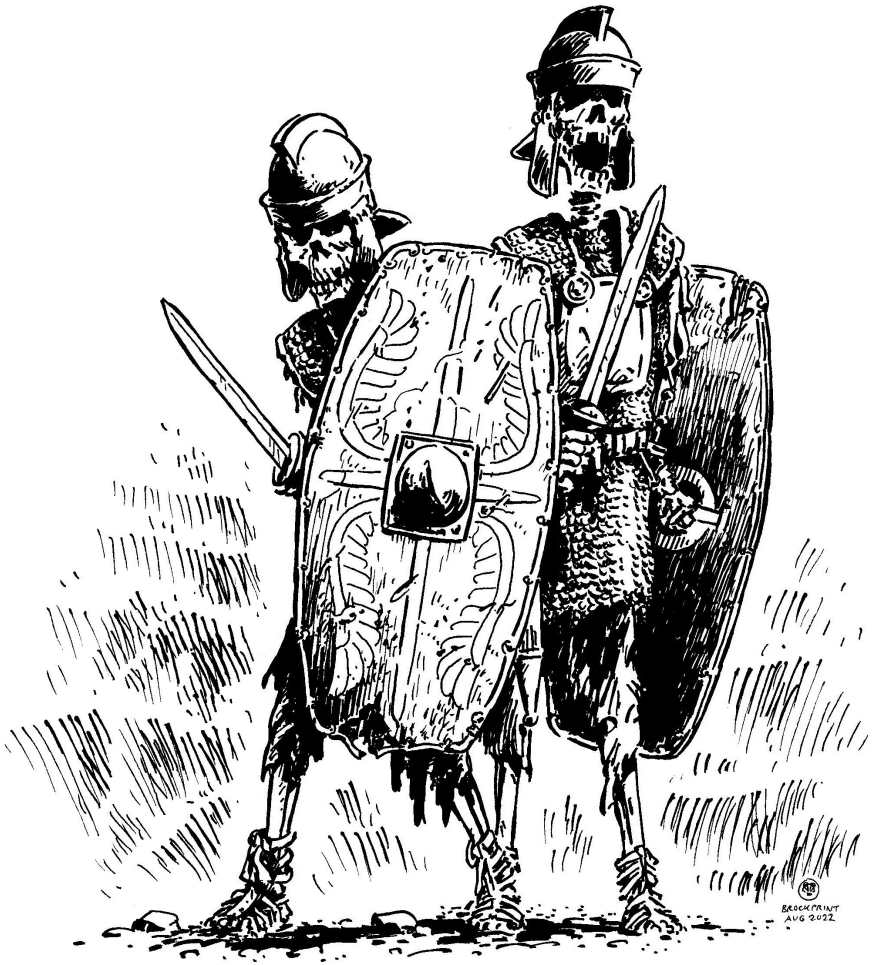
There doesn't seem to be anything else to find here. Turn to 114.

233.

If you have the keyword *Necropolis* turn to 109 now. Otherwise, if you have the keyword *Ossuary* turn to 250.

As you venture forward, you are greeted by a clash of metal. Two skeletal figures step out of the shadows, dressed in the antique armour of Selentine legionaries. Skulls grin from beneath the visors as the sentries raise their swords.

If you wish to surrender to the dead soldiers turn to 186. To fight them turn to 202.



234.

You are in a curving segment of passage, lit from both directions by a soft orange glow, which you know issues from blocks of amber set into the walls.

There is no amber where you are standing, but there does seem to be a large rectangle marked out in the right hand wall, rather like some sort of concealed doorway. Bending closer, you make out what looks like a keyhole, though it's of a curious shape.

You can try to open if it if you wish, if you have an item that might serve.

- To try a **bronze key** turn to 227
- To try a **silver key** turn to 227
- To try a **fingerbone** turn to 277

The passage continues left towards the entrance (turn to 142), and right, deeper into the depths (turn to 184).

235.

You are woken from your rest by a sudden crash and a yell of alarm, that rapidly becomes a scream of pain.

You scramble out of your tent to find armed riders trampling your camp. A single glance in the half-light tells you that these are Steno's men, but luckily only a raiding party, not a full force.

Still, you must fight them.

> ***Raiders*** *(2nd) — Att 15 Def 7 MD 5 Eva 5 Ref 12 Ste 19 Per 9 AF 2 HP 12 Sword (d8,4)*

You must fight three of the raiders, one at a time, because the chaos of the raid prevents them from ganging up on you, and you may use items in between each one if you wish.

If you survive the combats turn to 59, otherwise the raiders show no mercy, and your adventure ends here.

YOUR ADVENTURE ENDS HERE

236.

You are in a narrow passage in the bowels of Calligus' tomb. The terrifying wheeze of the beast's breathing, and the noxious stench of its breath are mercifully muted here. The passage runs between two of the stanchions holding the chains that bind the demon, one deeper (turn to 244) and one closer to the main shaft (turn to 37).

About halfway along its length, the passage widens into a sort of alcove, where the ancient ashlar blocks have fallen away into a natural cavity. Slabs of stone, laid flat and upright in series, form a sort of box shelf in the walls. As you cautiously approach the shelves you hear a hissing noise, and are surprised to see a snake raise its head from where it is coiled in the back of one of the niches.

A living creature, in these depths? A second glance tells you that it isn't so. The snake is some sort of magical marvel of animated copper and lapis. A treasure of Kaikuhuru perhaps, somehow preserved in the lightless hell.

If you want to try and grab the **copper asp**, make a DF10 check of your REFLEXES. If you fail, the snake sinks its fangs into you. It does not have venom, but makes a magical attack of 11, which you must resist. If you fail, the snake sucks away a point of your ATTACK and DEFENCE, which will not return until you rest.

If you succeed, you grasp the asp, which winds itself around your arm, with its head resting on the back of your hand, like a very heavy bracelet. In this position it does not require an inventory slot, and will attack anything that you hit with a successful melee strike, making the same magical attack as listed above. It will do this only the first time you strike a particular foe in a fight, however.

237.

Panting, you cut down the last of the undead creatures, and stand victorious amongst their remains — but not for long.

In hideous reverse, their wounds reknit, their limbs reunite, and the corpses slither backwards into their tombs, closing the lids behind them. Only the broken sarcophagus remains open, and here at last you see a hint of treasure.

Within the base of the broken coffin — amongst a grisly collection of bones and mummified gristle — you spot the glint of precious metal. Digging through the remains you uncover a delicate **silver cup**, a segment of a **garnet studded necklace**, and a **lump of amber**.

When you are done, you hurry out of the chamber, before the ghouls rise again. Turn to 244.

238.

You approach the spectre of Argantbri, which distills itself from the air as you draw near, sending a chill through you.

"Mortal, you have decided to leave?"

"I have some further questions," you say. "About the creatures trapped here, about why the floor descended, about the lens above us, and the King's purpose. There is so much we do not know in this age, not even how he met his end, or what was the treasure men spoke of."

The ghost appears to look straight through you as you speak, as if it has not heard you, and you wonder if the apparition is truly an intelligent being after so many centuries, or merely a vestige echoing long rehearsed words from the past.

"Do not delay," the ghost intones, "the longer you linger, the more the dead will gather to keep you here."

If you wish to tell Argantbri that you are ready to leave, turn to 26. Otherwise you can return to the main chamber (turn to 54).

239.

You dive down into the frigid water. The icy aura is so sharp that you take 1d4 damage (reduced by your AF to a minimum of 1).

Swimming over to the front of the tomb you see that there are indeed three spots that hold a stone. If you have three **triangular keystones** you can place all three — placing fewer than three just doesn't seem to work.

There are three possible spaces to put each stone, pick which one you want to use:

- 1 on top, 2 and 3 at the bottom (turn to 241)
- 1 on top, 3 and 2 at the bottom (turn to 211)
- 2 on top, 1 and 3 at the bottom (turn to 82)
- 2 on top, 3 and 1 at the bottom (turn to 80)
- 3 on top, 1 and 2 at the bottom (turn to 189)
- 3 on top, 2 and 1 at the bottom (turn to 20)

You can also swim back to the surface (turn to 194), or investigate a glint to one side (turn to 156).

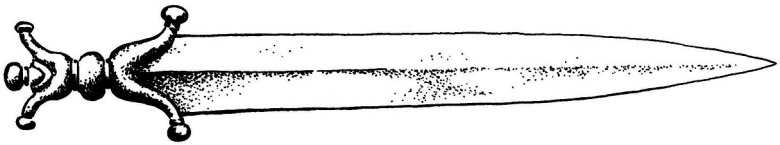
240.

To try and grab the heart you will need to make a STEALTH check against Calligus' PERCEPTION of 20. Luckily Calligus is still bound on its back, and the sulphurous fog and massive chains give you precious cover. Because of this, Calligus' PERCEPTION is reduced to 11 for this roll. (Roll 2d10+11 to score less than or equal to your STEALTH). If you have **wassa's blessing** you may add 5 to your STEALTH for this roll.

Calligus immediately reacts, trying to grab you in its immense hand and crush the life from you. Evade an attack with a SPEED of 16 if you failed the stealth check, or 12 if you passed or be caught. This attack has -3 SPEED for each of the chains that are still fastened (that is, for each of the keywords *Burial*, *Cemetery*, *Tumulus*, and *Zombie* you do *not* have, give Calligus -3 SPEED).

If you fail to evade the attack, you are grasped and immediately take 2d10 damage (reduced by AF). If this reduces you to 0HP turn to 183 now. Otherwise, you will take the same damage at the end of each of the following combat rounds unless you escape first. You can do this by successfully casting a spell such as *Intangibility*, *Teleport*, or *Vaporize*, or by rolling less than or equal to your STRENGTH on 3d10.

If you manage to get away, turn to 145.



241.

You attempt to place the three stones, but they won't seem to click into place. You guess that the order must be wrong.

Gasping, you splash back to the surface, where you drag yourself, dripping and frustrated, back to the entrance to the chamber. Behind you, the tomb is silent and enigmatic, its secret — if it has one — still unrevealed.

You can dive down to have another attempt (turn to 239), head back up the passage (turn to 273), or give up entirely (turn to 131).

242.

"Well," the cook says, looking down at your rapidly cooling remains, "*that's* meat for sure!"

So saying, he hauls your carcass onto his workbench and begins the merry process of cutting you up to add to the food he is preparing.

YOUR ADVENTURE ENDS HERE

243.

You bend close to examine the frescoes, and then recoil in alarm. Scenes of torture and mutilation flicker in the strange amber glow, almost alive. The remaining panels appear to show some mass slaughter, skeletal figures with the heads of rams are shown armed with scythes, lopping off the heads and limbs of fleeing figures. Some scene from nightmare? Or perhaps an ancient depiction of hell.

You are glad to step away (turn to 140).

244.

You enter one of the claustrophobic stanchion chambers. The heavy chain runs through a circular opening above the low arch that leads to the central chamber (turn to 81), and then sags down towards the heavy bronze hasp fastening it to the floor.

Make a DC12 PSYCHIC TALENT test. If you pass turn to 133.

> If you have the keyword *Burial* this chain has been undone, and there is nothing more to do here but choose an exit. Otherwise, if you wish to try and release the chain, turn to 226.

At the back of this chamber, a narrow arch (turn to 15), with a skull and bones stacked in a niche above it, opens onto a second beehive chamber, close on the back of the first. A larger arch leads back to Calligus's chamber (turn to 81), while two smaller passages run towards the beast's feet (turn to 76), and across to the other side of the tomb (turn to 77).

245.

The lancing spears, driven by some ancient mechanism, pierce you through, your bright hot blood sheeting down your body to mix with the dry dust and bones.

As you sink to the ground, a black shape creeps towards you. You catch a glimpse of thorny limbs and malevolent blue eyes before death claims you.

YOUR ADVENTURE ENDS HERE

246.

How long have these ghouls been imprisoned here with nothing but the demon's fumes to live off? Long enough to make them tear into your corpse like it was the finest of meals. Your limbs are torn off, your bones cracked, and the marrow devoured. Eventually what little is left is stuffed into the broken sarcophagus for future need.

YOUR ADVENTURE ENDS HERE

247.

Gain the keyword *Inter*

You place a **candle** on the altar (remove it from your inventory) and light it. The mystical glow intensifies, filling the chamber with soft yellow light. As it spreads it seems to sink into the stone, and flow back down the corridor behind you.

You become aware of many whispers in the air — souls freed from their imprisonment. They murmur their thanks as they flow past you, and also a warning: *Beware, for there are creatures bound here not deserving of mercy. Choose carefully...*

The voices fall silent, and you decide to leave the passage Turn to 54, checking a box.

248.

You are in the central chamber of the catacombs, albeit at a lower level than before. A rising spiral path winds around the inside of the vast shaft but much of it is broken, so that it only gives access to a few entrances close to ground level. Overhead, the vast stained-glass lens gathers sunlight you cannot even see, and casts it down as a shifting medley of light.

In the centre of the chamber, Master Cuthbert works at your makeshift camp, arranging significant fragments of marked stone into patterns.

From here you may:

- Speak with Cuthbert (turn to 135)
- Take a moment to rest (turn to 169)
- Store or retrieve items from your belongings (turn to 97)

You may also venture into one of the open tunnels leading out of the shaft. Three of these are open, while others are covered by enormous circular stone slabs.

- One at ground level (turn to 177)
- One with a light glowing within (turn to 213)
- One that opens onto the spiral ramp (turn to 78)

If you have a **copper tray** turn to 74 to examine it.

If you can cast *Fly* or *Levitate* and wish to try and fly to the surface, even though you would be leaving Cuthbert behind, turn to 25

249.

The curving passageway here is lit by a soft amber glow that pulses from somewhere deeper into the rock, ebbing and flowing like slow waves. It is almost hypnotic, and you are careful not to allow yourself to be overcome by it.

Then you hear a voice. Is it carried on the light, or whispering in your head? You can't tell the difference. It says, *Is not mercy deserved after so much pain? What were our crimes set against a thousand years of agony? Commend us to your God instead, traveller.*

You shake your head, and the voice vanishes. You can head out to the entrance (turn to 223) or deeper (turn to 71).

250.

A pair of skeletal legionaries emerge from niches to either side of the passage, their swords poised to stab at you, but they recognise you before they strike, and step back to let you pass.

You can head deeper (turn to 47) or return to the entrance (turn to 162).

251.

If you have the **first king's crown** turn to 280, otherwise turn to 182.

252.

A long passage snakes away into the darkness. Hundreds of niches are placed seemingly at random along the walls — foot height, shoulder height, head height. Many are filled with crude brown pottery urns, their tops fixed in place with the remains of millennia-old wax.

Other urns have fallen to the ground and smashed, leaving a residue of dust and bone that crunches under your feet. If you'd like to examine the urns more closely turn to 225.

A side passage, barely two feet wide, heads to one side (turn to 196), while the main passage continues towards the entrance (turn to 12) and deeper (turn to 181).

253.

The clutching fingers of the dead drag you down, latching not into your flesh but your soul. "It's better this way," the massed voices wail, "we were slain by Calligus and our fate is much worse!" So it may seem to them, to your tortured spirit there is no difference to be found.

YOUR ADVENTURE ENDS HERE

254.

You must fight the spectre. If you did not attempt to use an item, you have one surprise round to act before the combat begins.

> ***Spectre*** *(rank 8) — Att 19, Touch (d12,5) Def 12 MD 11 Eva 4 Ref 6 Ste 18 Per 13 AF 0 HP 16*
>
> *Non-magical weapons and physical spells have no effect.*

You may flee after the first round, but the Spectre hits you automatically. If you flee, you run right out of the passage, turn to 54. If you win turn to 143. If you lose turn to 219.

255.

You enter a small side-chamber, dominated by a sarcophagus of worn grey stone. A skeleton is laid out on top, surrounded by a bloom of silver lichen stains. The corroded remains of an ancient helmet encases the disconnected skull, while a copper bound axe rests at its side.

As you enter, the lolling skull rises from the stone, a baleful light shining from its eyes. Then it flies at you!

> ***Flying Skull*** *(rank 4) — Att 16, Bite (d10,3) Def 15 MD 8 Eva 7 Ref 4 Ste 15 Per 12 AF 0 HP 3*
>
> *On round one, the skull makes a 1d12 Fright Attack. If you succumb, you gain one Exhaustion. Unaffected by Hold Off The Dead.*

If you are defeated by the skull turn to 153, otherwise you may help yourself to its **copper axe** (d8,4) (if you have not already taken it). Taking a second look at the decaying helmet you realise it is bound with a **silver circlet** which you can also detach and take, before leaving the chamber (turn to 259).

256.

You cautiously enter the side chamber containing the tomb you thought depicted a woman. The carving is crude, and worn away by the passage time. Tiny fox-flowers of sulphur crystals mar the old marks, but you can make out a figure in a dress and long flowing hair.

"I did not look so much like that in life," says a voice.

Resist a strength 5 fright attack (*roll 2d10+your rank. if you roll 5 or less, you fail*). If you fail, you flee heedlessly in terror (turn to 62).

If you resist the fright attack, you steel yourself, and turn to face the ghost of the woman, which has appeared, grey and translucent, in the shadows of the chamber. She certainly doesn't resemble the carving, for she is armed as a warrior, in a kilted dress, with a spear in her hand and a shield on her back.

"Who ... who are you?" you ask.

"My name was Wassa," she says, "and I was but one of many who fell victim to Calligus, the beast. It was my misfortune to live long enough to see my King slain, his heart ripped from his chest. I breathed my last even as they laid him to rest in this prison tomb. It was the wish of us all to make the long watch at his side, and so I linger here."

"Am I the first come here?"

"The first to come so deep in a long age. The beast has grown weaker, but no less cunning. He causes the Catacombs to be found, in the hope that someone will release him. Only the mortal wound the King delivered him, and old Argantbri's clever sorcery, hold him chained. Do not believe his lies."

You make the sign of the cross, though your gesture means nothing to the ancient spirit, and swear: "I wish only to escape this place!"

"Then you shall have my blessing," she says, though her voice is sad, as if she does not anticipate that you will survive. "And also this warning. The prison we made for Calligus is well defended. If you attempt to loosen the chains you will be prevented. Choose your course carefully."

You have more questions to ask, but the spirit grows paler by the second, as if worn thin. Before you can ask more, Wassa is gone.

Gain **wassa's blessing** (does not use an inventory slot) and return to 76.

257.

You splash messily out of the water, where thankfully the giant fish can't follow you. You can run towards the entrance (turn to 150), left (turn to 147), right (turn to 114), or deeper (turn to 273).

258.

You are in the central chamber of the catacombs, at its lowest level, a stygian gloom stained yellow with the sulphurous light seeping through the cracks in the floor. With the light comes foul fumes, a stench of death and evil.

> While you are in the lowest level, you suffer a minimum of one level of Exhaustion, unless you find a way to clear the fumes.

From here you may:

- Speak with Cuthbert (turn to 93)
- Investigate the amber block in the centre of the room (turn to 31)
- Examine the amber panel (turn to 270)
- Examine the giant lantern (turn to 84)
- Take a moment to rest (turn to 203)
- Store or retrieve items from your belongings (turn to 97)

There is only one tomb entrance here, and that is the most dangerous of all. Still, you may:

- Approach the tomb of Calligus (turn to 91)

259.

The skull-lined passage opens out here into a low circular chamber dominated by an enormous statue of a skull, carved from black diorite, which rests on a pillar in its centre. The eye sockets, fully a hand-span in width, seem to stare right into you. Loose **skulls**, perhaps shaken from their alcoves, lie scattered on the floor.

To examine the statue closer turn to 216.

Four arches of crumbling masonry open onto passages leading away from here. One towards the faint glow of the entrance (turn to 129), one left (turn to 190), one right (turn to 255), and one deeper (turn to 79).

260.

If you have the keyword *Sepulchre* turn to 150 now. Otherwise gain the keyword *Sepulchre*.

The sound of splashing water is louder here, as if there is a pool of open water nearby. Here, the passage has been worn nearly smooth by the trickle of water over the stone, which glistens in the light as you approach.

You are so accustomed to the dead silence of the catacombs that the sound of running water seems almost like music to your ears, singing of open fields, bright sunlight, and fresh air. You stop, entranced.

The more you listen, the more it feels like there is an actual voice singing. It sings:

> You who walk still under the sun of heaven, remember me. You who taste still the bread of earth, think of me. You who delve in darkness, find my tomb and name me

You must resist a MAGICAL ATTACK of 10 (roll 2d10 and add your MAGICAL DEFENCE, looking to get more than 10). If you fail, you are hypnotised by the spectral music for so long that you gain one level of Exhaustion, and your light source expires, leaving you in darkness. If you don't have another source of light, you must creep your way back to the main chamber (turn to 54).

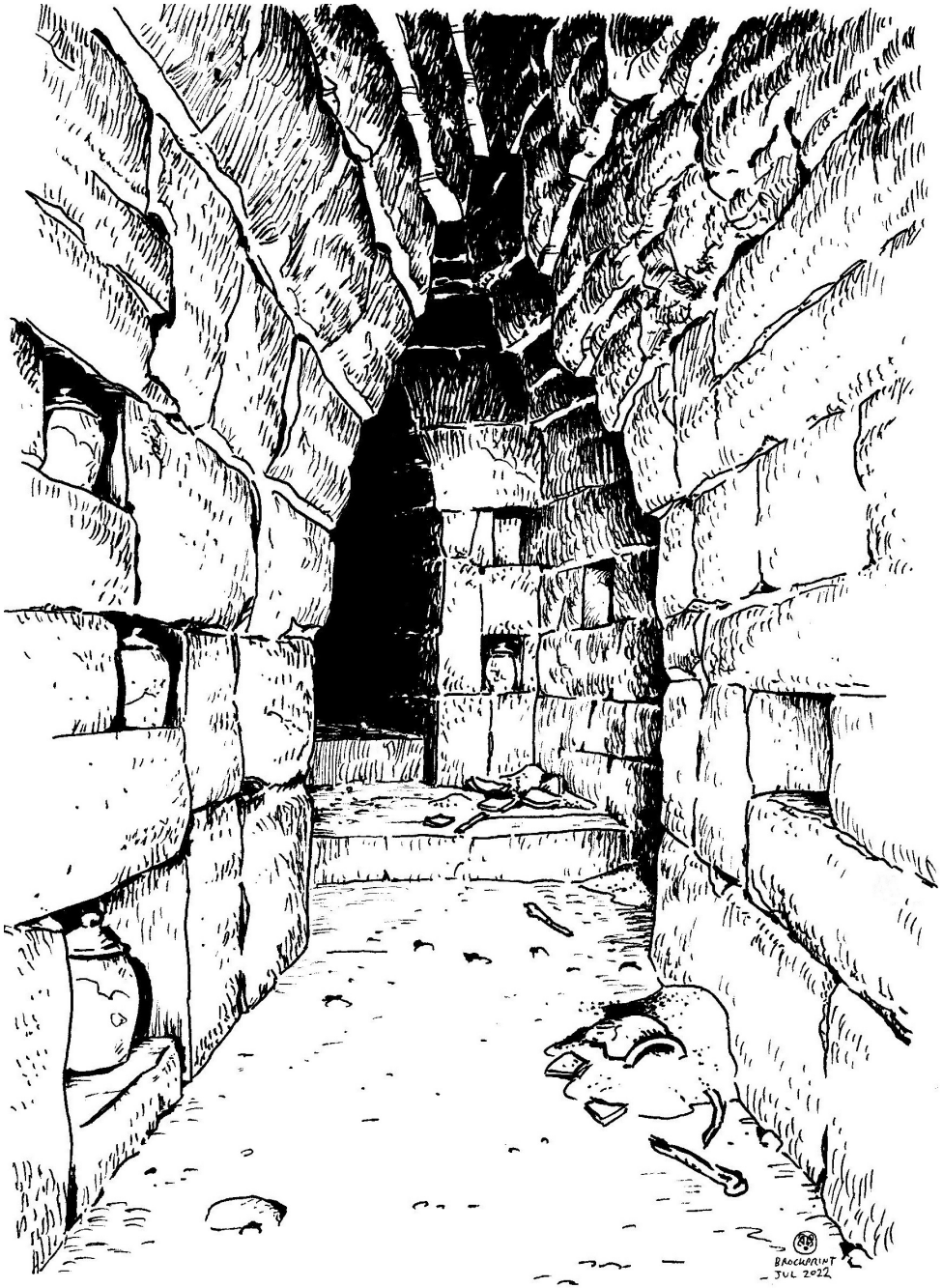
If you resist, turn to 150

261.

The passageway here is lined with long niches, each containing a body (you assume) encased in full-body armour. The armour is ornate, arcane, and corroded with verdigris, so that the ancient plates are riddled with holes.

Each dead warrior clutches a blade to their chest, and has a mess of wax upon their helmet where you guess candles were once lit. To prove your theory, a few of the corpses have intact candles still in place.

You can light the unlit candles (turn to 207), or help yourself to some (turn to 205), continue down the corridor (turn to 30), or return to the entrance (turn to 262).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262.

To proceed, you must have a source of light (see the introduction). When you leave this area your light source will be used up (removed from your inventory). If you use a light providing spell, it will expire at that same time. If you don't have a source of light, you must leave the passage (turn to 177) now.

You venture through the portal into a passageway constructed of enormous slabs resting heavily on standing stones. The cracks between them are stuffed with smaller rocks, many of which have spilled out across the passage floor.

About five yards in, the passage splits in two, divided by a massive upright stone. The stone is scalloped with countless niches, of the type that might hold a candle.

If you have a spare **candle**, and wish to light one in a niche, turn to 16. Otherwise you can turn left (turn to 261), right (turn to 197), or return to the main chamber (turn to 54).

263.

As you move to attack the skull it cries out, "Treachery! Beware. I have destroyed more worthy foes than you!"

The flame burning inside the skull pours out, forming a spectral body that draws a flaming sword from thin air and wades forward to fight you.

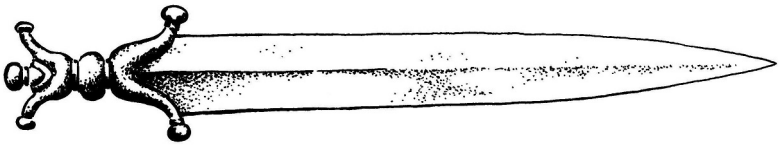
> ***Conoc*** *(rank 7) — Att 17, Spectral Sword (d10+1,6) Def 10 MD 10 Eva 3 Ref 7 Ste 13 Per 11 AF 4 HP 18*
>
> *On round one, Conoc makes a 2d6 Fright Attack in addition to attacking.*
> *On round three, Concoc's flame rises, resist a Magical Attack of 20 or lose 1d8HP.*
> *Each time you hit Conoc with a physical attack, you suffer 2HP of damage, unless you are immune to fire.*

If you lose the fight turn to 170, otherwise 110.

264.

You search through the contents of the open coffin, sending drifting blooms of dust, as fine as silt, rising into the air, but there is nothing to be found other than some **fragile bones**, and a handful of ancient tarnished coins (worth 2d6 florins).

Turn to 114.



265.

The journey to the surface is much speedier than your descent, thanks to your magic, though it still requires skill to avoid the ropes and chains that dangle down across your path. As you go you pass the giant lens once more, and it's hard not to imagine that the emblazoned eye turns to follow you — though it surely does not.

Eventually, you reach the top (turn to 209).

266.

You haul open one of the heavy bronze sides of the lantern and lean inside to study the strange mechanism within.

A broad bowl of what appears to be amber, but might be something like alabaster, rests atop a mechanism of bronze and copper. The mechanism bears some small resemblance to the wick raiser and reservoir of an oil lantern, but such a thing cannot have existed when this relic was placed in the tomb, and in any case, there are no clamps for a wick, nor font for oil. The arcane runes engraved into the bowl suggest that magic, not mechanism, powers this lantern.

Peering inside the bowl you find a yellowish ball of stone, which turns to dust when you touch it. It puts you in mind of a sphere of amber, but with all the colour drained from it.

If you have any **lumps of amber** you can try placing one in the bowl (turn to 4) to see what happens. Otherwise you leave the chamber (turn to 54).

267.

Gain the keyword *Kokh*

Perhaps mercy is what the First King intends for all his prisoners now, after so long. Mercy was part of the Saviour's message, after all. You take up the amber sword and swing it hard at the block. The stone rings like a bell and cracks in two.

Smoke swirls from the riven stone, solidifying into bones, cloth, metal — a skeletal figure eight feet tall and clothed in rags, with a champing ram's skull for a head.

The creature raises one bony hand and conjures a scythe from thin air. "Fool," the creature clacks, "the reward for your foolish *mercy* will be death, the first of many."

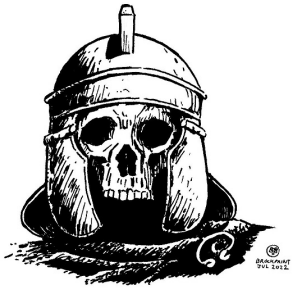
You must fight Acteus.

> ***Acteus*** *(rank 8) — Att 18, Scythe (D10+2,8) Def 14 MD 15 Eva 5 Ref 5 Ste 11 Per 14 AF 4 HP 35*
>
> *Not affected by Banish, takes half damage from physical attacks and indirect spells. If Acteus lands a critical hit he will remove your head with his scythe, killing you instantly.*

If you survive the first two rounds you may flee back to the main chamber (turn to 54), but Acteus will get a free attack on you. If you win turn to 146, if you lose turn to 161.

268.

You turn to flee down the passage, exposing your back to the merciless blades of the skeletal legionaries. Take 8 damage. If this kills you, turn to 215, otherwise you flee back to the junction (turn to 47).



269.

"To this, I know the answer," you tell Conoc. "It is Ludic who lies here, with all his men."

The glowing skull rises from the plinth and dips towards you. "Correct. It is good that some still remember the wars we fought, for the earth was a safer place once we had done. For four and twenty years I was at my Lord's side, as he set his crown and seal upon the evils of this place, with my brother Cenric at my side.

"It is my only regret that I did not meet my end before my Lord was laid to rest, for I was there the day that foul Calligus ripped the heart from his noble chest and brought all to dust. Cenric did not live so long, but he too serves.

"Now, as reward for answering my question, I shall open the way, and may all the Gods have mercy on your soul, for the Catacombs shall not."

The light fades from the skull, which sinks back to the plinth, lifeless once more. No sooner has it done so, than the whole chamber trembles beneath your feet! Dust showers from the ceiling, followed by blocks of stone, as some tremendous process begins, shaking the very earth, and echoing from the main shaft behind you.

Turn to 132.

270.

You approach the amber panel set into the wall of the main chamber. It is a narrow thing, more like a door than the blocks you have seen before. Through the crystal pane you can just make out some sort of space or chamber.

> If you have the keyword *Lychgate*, and the lantern is **Illuminating the amber pane**, turn to 180, otherwise, read on.

Cuthbert joins you at the panel; you can see him reflected in it as a pale distorted ghost.

"The spirit said 'Bring the King's fire. Shine it upon the door, open the gate' and only then would we be able to escape," Cuthbert says. "I don't know about you, but I feel we have outstayed our welcome in this cursed place."

"We came for treasure," you remind him, unenthusiastically.

Cuthbert tugs on his ear unhappily. "We did. Without knowing what we would face here. If there's treasure here, it's probably something metaphorical, like an ear of corn, or a peasant's clog. We should learn what the ghost meant, and be out of here."

Return to 258.

271.

You join Pyran at the campfire, and help yourself to the cheeses, hams, hard bread, and wine that you packed for the journey, there's plenty of everything.

After a while you turn in, relishing the comfort of your blankets and tent.

Restore lost HP equal to your Rank, and remove any levels of Exhaustion you may have. You may also restore any lost MP, or Psychic Fatigue. If this is the first time you have rested here, turn to 141. Otherwise turn to 209, ticking a box.

272.

The huge lantern fills the little chamber with amber light, as steady as sunlight on a summer day. You wish that you could bring it out of its alcove and light the main chamber in the same way, but no matter how you wrestle with the ancient bronze cage, you cannot shift it, although there is the slightest slack in the heavy chain connecting it to the chamber's ceiling, enough to make you think that the lantern *could* be moved if the chain were loose.

To leave the chamber turn to 54.

273.

You splash your way down a passage awash in freezing water, that glimmers green in your light. It's definitely getting deeper.

To your left, a side-passage appears to slope down, so that it goes rapidly under-water. You will have to swim if you want to go that way (turn to 92). A little way further along, a ragged sort of alcove appears to give onto a steep shaft leading up (turn to 107).

The main passage runs back towards the entrance (turn to 58), and further into the darkness (turn to 194).

274.

You place the **dead king's heart** inside the open sarcophagus and step back. The organ is practically mummified, but when you rest it amongst the ashes of the King, it begins to beat, fitfully at first, and then stronger. A red glow suffuses it, like the sunset seen through a ruby, spreading out through the dust.

Time unknits. The dust becomes bones, flesh, skin, hair. The flakes of metal reconstitute into armour. The tired threads ravel back into cloth. The clothing fits itself once more around the body.

When the process is complete, the King is whole once more, though his bright armour is still cracked where Calligus pulled the heart from his body. You expect him to leap from the coffin, resurrected, but he is still dead, an uncorrupted body, like a pagan saint.

What does rise, is the King's spirit. A red-tinged apparition that sits up out of the corpse like a man waking from a long sleep.

"Hwa ora eow?" the ghost asks. Then, seeing your confusion, appears to reach for a more modern tongue, plucking it out of the air.

"Who is't art thee?"

"Seekers after lost truth," you answer, remembering the tests of the tombs above.

The answer seems to please the ghost. "A long time have I lived in agony. Now my watch o'er the beast cans't be a peaceful one. 'Tis only right you are rewarded for your courage."

The ghost raises its hand, and at this gestured command the lens and lantern rotate, bringing their beam to rest on another part of the Catacombs, a previously unmarked section of the wall that melts away to reveal a hidden chamber, where the burial goods of the King were placed.

"Take thee only of what ye need," says the ghost.

There are jewels and gold aplenty here, enough for each of you to pocket a **king's ransom**. In addition, some of the precious items of the King were interred alongside him. You may take any one of the following, with the King's blessing.

- **angrvadill** — the Kings +2 Longsword
- **argantbri's charm** — acts as an Ankh of Osiris
- A **ring of red ruin** with 15 charges
- **satchel of need** — occupies one inventory slot, but can hold seven items

> You can choose to take more than one item, but you will have the King's curse for it. For each item after the first you will suffer -1 to all rolls *permanently* in all future games that you play, unless a priest of at least 8th Rank lifts the curse from you.

When you have taken what you need, the King's ghost turns the lens to face the amber panel, which opens to reveal a narrow stair.

"I bid thee farewell," the ghost says, and sinks back into its amber sarcophagus.

Turn to 182.

275.

Your mystic powers rip open a gate in the darkness of the catacombs, through which you can see a slice of sunlit hillside — an escape route.

You step through before the route can close.

You emerge onto a windswept hillside. The first rays of dawn fall golden on the sighing leaves of a small wood in the valley below. It's beautiful, but your heart is like lead, knowing that you left Cuthbert trapped in the Catacombs depths.

It takes you two days to make your way back to the hillside, avoiding the occasional patrols of Baron Steno's outriders. The sad remains of your camp litter the dry gorse, but of the great rift into the earth there is no sign.

You scrabble in vain at the grey rocks, shouting Cuthbert's name, but there is nothing beneath the claggy soil but more stones. The Catacombs are gone, as if they were nothing more than a dream. You still have whatever was in your possession when you opened the gate, but that's little comfort now.

Eventually, knowing that your cause is hopeless, you erect a crude marker for Cuthbert's grave and begin the long journey back to civilisation.

Turn to 279.

276.

Your mystic powers rip open a gate in the darkness of the catacombs, through which you can see a slice of sunlit hillside — an escape route.

You quickly gather your own belongings (you may visit 97 and recover any items you wish, while following your normal inventory limits, then return here). Cuthbert does the same with his rubbings and notes, packing his satchel with them.

The two of you step through the portal together, and emerge onto a windswept hillside. The first rays of dawn fall golden on the sighing leaves of a small wood in the valley below.

"God be praised," Cuthbert mutters.

You clamber up onto an exposed rock to take stock, wherever this is, it is not where you entered, and by the time you return to Cuthbert the gate has closed behind you. The Catacombs will hold their secrets for a rather longer time, it seems. There seems to be no choice but to head into the valley and look for habitation.

Turn to 279.

277.

The lock opens with surprising ease, and the panel swings open.

The chamber beyond is barely lit, but you make out walls covered with intact frescoes. Here, the full story of the skeleton beasts is shown in faded glory. A foul King, ram-headed, sits on a black throne, served by human slaves. In another panel the creatures are shown at their grisly work of murder, killing men for sport.

On the other side of the chamber the First King, still nameless, is shown making war on the creatures of the black throne. The two meet in battle, and the ram king is thrown down along with all its warriors, defeated but not dead, as far as you can tell.

You crouch down to see the lowest panels. Here the King is shown in his crown. A golden light issues from it, and where the rays touch the defeated creatures, it encases them in stone, just as you have seen in the passages.

When and where this was, you cannot think. What nameless kingdom that the First King freed, now all lost to the past. You remember the speaking skull. This was Conoc's lesson, of course.

Something catches your eye as you turn to leave. A disc of amber lies on the dusty floor, with the remnants of a leather cord attached to it. You pick up the **amber disc**. While you carry the disc, you may deflect blows as if you were bearing a shield, without requiring a free hand.

You decide to leave the room (turn to 234).

278.

You duck through a low opening into what was once a tomb. The vaults set into the walls have been smashed open, their contents plundered to sate the unnatural hungers of the undead. You wonder if the creatures interred here deserved this fate. Were they allies of the First King, or monsters in their own right who deserve this fate?

You are about to leave when you hear a whisper, seemingly right in your ear, a honey-dripped, luxuriant voice, that sends shivers down your spine. It says, *Be careful around the centurion. You must show him the truth, words are not enough.*

You snatch out your weapon and look for the source of the voice, but there is nothing to be found, and it does not speak again. Eventually, you return to 111.

279.

Your venture to the Catacombs of Dust is done. When you make your way back to the hillside where you entered, there is no sign of the shaft, and you do not dare to linger lest Baron Steno catch up with you, you must be content with what you have.

Gain 2xp for each of the following keywords: *Dolmen*, *Inter*, *Kokh*, *Mausoleum*, *Ossuary*, *Pyramid*, and *Tomb*.

If you have the keyword *Lychgate* gain 3xp.

If you have the keyword *Headstone* gain 6xp.

Don't forget to also gain xp for each of the monsters you defeated during the adventure.

Some of the items you have recovered from the tomb are of value:

broken femur	1 cp
copper bracelet	90 fl
fragile bones	1 cp
garnet studded necklace	200 fl
giant barbel	1 fl
king's ransom	2000 fl
jewelled aquila	150 fl
lump of amber	50 fl
moonstone	200 fl
ruby	500 fl
silver circlet	150 fl
silver cup	200 fl
silver ring	100 fl
white crystal	30 fl

THE END

280.

Cuthbert hurries over with his pack clutched to his chest, notes and fragments gathered from the tomb entrances overflowing from his pockets.

You quickly gather your own belongings (you may visit 97 and recover any items you wish, while following your normal inventory limits, then return here).

Within the passage, a narrow and crooked stair winds up through the rock, its walls striated with veins of quartz and granite. The foot is illuminated by the distant lens light, but as you start your climb it falls into shadow.

After a few turns, you feel a tremble in the stone, then another, and another, each more rapid and violent than the last. A vast groan echoes through the rock, making Cuthbert tremble and cross himself. It sounds like nothing so much as the satisfied yawn of a waking sleeper.

"AT LAST"

A voice echoes through the tunnels, so unctuous and smug that it makes your bowls tremble and your skin crawl. It is the voice of Calligus, you have no doubt.

"I HAVE WAITED SO LONG FOR SOME FOOL TO RELEASE ME," the voice booms, issuing from the empty air as if the demon had bent to croon lovingly in your ear. You feel the hot touch of his sulphurous breath.

You grab your weapon, prepared for a desperate battle, but there is nothing to strike. Maybe if you run back to the tomb, move the lens, return the crown to the sarcophagus?

"TOO LATE FOR THAT," Calligus murmurs, as if reading your mind, "BUT DO NOT WORRY. THERE WILL BE TIME TO ENJOY YOUR CURSED VICTORY BEFORE YOU ARE DESTROYED, I WILL LEAVE YOU FOR LAST."

There is a rush of foetid wind, as the demon's spirit rushes past you, out into the open world. You and Cuthbert can only dumbly follow behind.

You emerge onto a burning hillside. The stench of smoke and corpses drifts from a town in the valley below. You recognise Casterbridge only from the ruins Calligus has left behind. Thus begins the demon's reign of terror, with no First King to stop it. Only you, nursing the poor reward of your supposedly priceless crown.

YOUR ADVENTURE ENDS HERE

A word from the Author

By the time this comes out it will be my third expedition into the world of Dragon Warriors Gamebooks. (Red Ruin has kindly also released my previous games: Green Water, Crimson Stag, Icon of Death, and The Beast of Black Tor). Those three previous games include a comple of simple short adventures, and a murder mystery, but for this game I wanted to try a full-blown dungeon crawl.

I *also* wanted to make it somewhat open-world and replayable, hence the rather complex system of checkboxes and keywords to allow you do the dungeons various areas in any order, to come and go, and even to skip some entirely, and still reach the end. That led naturally to the idea of managing rests, torches, and food, which form a core part of this game — it's easy to end up lost in the dark if you push things too far.

If you liked the game, or want to get in touch for any other reason, look me up at https://www.teuton.org/~stranger/.

David M. Donachie
Friday, 16th September 2022

Playtesting: Simon Barns, Paul Partington, Brock, J. L. Guyer

Front cover: David Donachie

Interior art: Brockprint, except for the illustration of Cuthbert, which is by David Donachie

Medieval illuminated cover border (on rear): www.cliparts.co/clipart/3687712

Use the following list to track keywords you have encountered.

- [ ] Ashes
- [ ] Barrow
- [ ] Burial
- [ ] Cemetery
- [ ] Charnel
- [ ] Cremation
- [ ] Crypt
- [ ] Dolmen
- [ ] Exhume
- [ ] Funeral
- [ ] Grave
- [ ] Haunt
- [ ] Headstone
- [ ] Inter
- [ ] Judgement
- [ ] Kokh
- [ ] Lychgate
- [ ] Mausoleum
- [ ] Necropolis
- [ ] Ossuary
- [ ] Pyramid
- [ ] Quietus
- [ ] Revenant
- [ ] Sepulchre
- [ ] Tomb
- [ ] Tumulus
- [ ] Undercroft
- [ ] Vault
- [ ] Wraith
- [ ] Yew
- [ ] Zombie

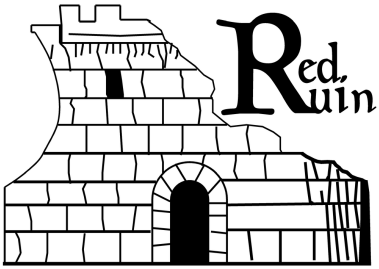
You can track any checkboxes ticked here, if you wish.

54 ☐☐☐☐

81 ☐☐☐☐

169 ☐☐☐☐☐☐

209 ☐☐☐☐



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